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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

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(Yellowknife Centre)
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Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Ms. Frieda Martselos
(Thebacha)

Ms. Katrina Nokleby
(Great Slave)

Mr. Steve Norn
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly
(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson
(Hay River South)

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Minister of Justice

Hon. Shane Thompson
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Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek
(Yellowknife South)

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Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	2199
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	2199
123-19(2) – Procurement Review (Wawzonek)	2199
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	2200
COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout (R. Simpson)	2200
Legislative Lethargy (O'Reilly)	2200
Dechinta Fish Camp (Norn)	2201
Hamlet of Enterprise Economic Opportunities (Bonnetrouge)	2201
Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month (Semmler)	2201
Tree of Peace Friendship Centre (Nokleby)	2202
Mineral Resource Exploration (Cleveland)	2202
Government Transparency and Open Government (Johnson)	2203
Rental Assessments in Nunakput (Jacobson)	2203
Bill C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families (Lafferty)	2204
Application of the Government of the Northwest Territories Affirmative Action Policy (Martselos)	2204
ORAL QUESTIONS	2205
RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS	2216
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	2217
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	2218
NOTICES OF MOTION	2219
29-19(2) – Systemic Racism	2219
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	2219
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	2241
ORDERS OF THE DAY	2242

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, March 1, 2021****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 123-19(2):
PROCUREMENT REVIEW**

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that, as we focus this sitting on the government's budget, including how GNWT spending impacts the NWT economy and the role it can play in our economic recovery efforts, we are also beginning a territory-wide conversation about our government's procurement practices and policies. Procurement is a significant tool that can positively increase the benefits of government spending on the private sector and, as a result, on the economy as a whole.

Ensuring that government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to residents and businesses is a priority established by the 19th Legislative Assembly. Building on that, one of our government's guiding principles is to ensure that the expenditure of public funds supports northern businesses and maximizes economic benefits to Northerners. This is consistent with our long-standing commitment to support Northwest Territories businesses and grow a strong, diversified economy. The conversation that has formally begun around procurement is part of the effort to achieve this priority and advance this guiding principle.

It is important to remember that the concerns and needs that led to this priority and, similarly, to the political recognition that it is time for new recommendations to improve procurement practices came from the territory's Indigenous governments and organizations, the business community, and the public at large, rightfully so as the last comprehensive review was over a decade

ago. The people of the NWT know and have made clear that we have an opportunity for positive and long-lasting change and that we need to work together to achieve it. At a time in our history when it is clearly needed, we are prepared to reset or re-imagine our government's approach to buying and contracting the goods and services it needs to deliver its mandate. To that end, we have accelerated our mandate commitment to strengthen GNWT procurement policies and practices.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in previous sittings about the procurement review. I want to use this opportunity to provide an update. Recently, I announced the start of the process to get this very important work done with the release of the discussion paper, dedicated section of the ITI website, and the introduction of our review panel.

We have put a review panel in place that I am confident will remain open-minded, objective, creative, and responsive and whom I have personally asked to do so. The panel will hear from a variety of stakeholders and residents. From panel interviews to written submissions, targeted-engagement opportunities, and an online discussion forum, we are working to ensure that everyone has a means and opportunity to share their thoughts and perspectives. We want the panel to hear real experiences with government procurement, both positive and otherwise. This should include specific examples of when the system did or did not work and collect innovative ideas for making our procurement process better. The panel will also meet with officials from Indigenous governments about GNWT procurement generally and ideas for a possible Indigenous procurement strategy and ways to best achieve the economic goals of modern treaties. I will continue to reach out to Indigenous leaders, as well, for ongoing government-to-government discussions about GNWT procurement. We need everybody with an interest in this discussion to seek out the information and opportunities that are available to provide their input.

Mr. Speaker, our use of a public review process reflects our confidence that the ideas and guidance needed on this important matter can be found in the leadership, experience, and creativity that exist within the Northwest Territories. We want to

continue to help stimulate economic growth and encourage entrepreneurship and local competition. Our review of public procurement is one part of work that must be done to support a resilient, more diverse economy. I encourage everyone in our territory to contribute to this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The handling of the COVID-19 pandemic by the Chief Public Health Officer and her staff has paid off when one looks at the low number of cases, with no confirmed deaths in the Northwest Territories. Compared to the rest of Canada, the NWT appears to be moving along quickly with the rollout of the vaccine, which has resulted in the NWT receiving 19,100 doses with another 16,200 expected shortly. To date, approximately 14,600 first doses and 2,000 second doses have been administered in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization, in an interim guidance communication dated January 25, 2021, stated that, 14 days after receiving the first dose of the vaccine, the efficacy is said to be 91.9 percent; after receiving the second dose, based on a two-month follow-up, it is said that an efficacy of 94.1 percent has been established. The World Health Organization and the Centre for Disease Control recommends that the second dose should be administered as close to the recommended interval as possible. The stated time for this second dose was to be 28 days after receiving the first dose. Recently, that number, that 28-day number, has been pushed out as far as 42 days.

Mr. Speaker, this government has to rely on the supplier for the vaccine and, as such, has no control when delivery will be made. When we know we are to receive the vaccine from the supplier, I would expect that a decision is made to either use it all up as a first dose or possibly hold some back to administer as a second dose when a delay becomes a reality. The delay in receiving additional supply has created anxiety among residents who were expecting a second dose of the vaccine on day 28.

Mr. Speaker, because of this delay, constituents in Hay River have been asking why the second dose was delayed and if this delay will have an impact on the efficacy of the vaccine, questions I will have for

the Minister of health later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LEGISLATIVE LETHARGY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. We are now about a third of the way through our term. I am increasingly concerned with lack of substantive legislation from Cabinet. To date, there have been a total of 24 bills, almost half of which were appropriations. This is not quite as bad as the last Cabinet as they had only introduced a total of six non-appropriation bills at this point. The bills from this Cabinet, outside of appropriations, deal with pithy matters, including:

- a monumental effort, with some of the most convoluted wording I have ever seen, to change the Public Highway Act to absolve GNWT of liability for winter roads connecting off our roads;
- the much-vaunted Temporary Variation of Statutory Time Periods (Covid-19 Pandemic Measures) Act that has been used once;
- probably my favourite, the Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act;
- housekeeping changes to the Securities Act; Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification Act; Legal Professions Act; and the Corrections Act;
- changes to the Interpretation Act that would have allowed Cabinet total discretion to change time zones and other time changes, which would not get my vote as something of importance to deal with during the pandemic;
- bills also from the Clerk's office to allow for remote sittings and to standardize more of the terms of contracts for the Assembly's independent officers. I think that is good legislation.

My point here, Mr. Speaker, is that we have yet to get anything substantive from Cabinet. We are supposed to be a Legislative Assembly, not a debating club. This less-than-ambitious legislative agenda has not put our committees to work nor delivered on the promises in the mandate nor the needs of our citizens. I am concerned that, like the last Assembly, we will have an avalanche of bills in the last few months of our term, which doesn't allow for good public input or careful consideration of improvements. I will have questions for the Premier

on Cabinet's legislative inertia and lethargy later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECHINTA FISH CAMP

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to talk about the Liwe camp, which is a fish camp that is hosted on Mackenzie Island, on the shores of Great Slave Lake, for the last two weeks and is hosted by the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning. This is the second time that Dechinta has hosted a public fish camp. I had the opportunity to visit the camp this past weekend. I had a great time being out there. Camp Liwe provides a great opportunity for community members to engage in culture, language, and other traditional ways of being on the land during the winter.

Mr. Speaker, Dechinta is an organization that is always striving to bridge the gap between the old ways of Indigenous life and the modern world. They blend culture and education and treat them with equal importance to one's identity. "Strong like two people," that is the motto of Dechinta, which encourages an individual to excel both in modern society and in traditional ways of being.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Dechinta and all the organizers who helped contribute to this event. By all accounts, it was a very successful event, and they are planning to run it again next year. I hope to continue seeing Dechinta host popular and successful community events like this into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just in line with my questioning last Friday, I'm going to continue asking some questions to the Minister of MACA on gaps in healthcare and emergency response. Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAMLET OF ENTERPRISE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Hamlet of Enterprise has approximately 120 residents; five businesses, including a motel, convenience, and gas bar. The businesses mostly cater to out-of-town requests for service, businesses such as a plumbing and heating contractor, cabinet supply company, modular home company, and the furniture cash-and-carry business. There are a couple of small, niche businesses such as Winnie's Dene Art Gallery and

D'Arcy Moses Fashion Design, both in the same building that used to house a former cafe and gas bar.

Mr. Speaker, one would think this was a vibrant and happening place, considering all that economic potential. However, many of the businesses are small mom-and-pop operations and cannot afford to hire new staff or any staff at all. Since COVID hit, this hamlet has been hit hard in terms of business potential and opportunities. The hamlet's only gas bar, motel, and convenience store has not opened for a couple of years since it had new owners, and this was due to COVID. I understand this may well be for sale once again.

The hamlet is the first community on Highway No. 1 and approximately 84 kilometres, roughly 54 miles, from the 60th parallel, the NWT-Alberta border. It is very puzzling that Enterprise is not touted as the gateway to the falls, as these are very near to the community. I don't see much signage in Enterprise or a visitors information centre to make visitors and tourists aware of these hotspots for activity. Even the residents who run small businesses are bypassed for campground custodian contracts. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in Canada. The Beaufort-Delta region has the NWT's highest rates of colorectal cancer and the lowest rates of screening, according to the NTHSSA. I can honestly say that most people from my region have been personally affected by this disease. I would like to give my condolences to all the families in the NWT who have lost loved ones to colorectal cancer as many of my friends and family have. To those who are survivors of colorectal cancer, please continue to be champions of colorectal screening. If caught, nine out of 10 people can be cured. This means screening is essential to prevent deaths from this disease.

Mr. Speaker, last February, the NTHSSA announced it was going to begin a pilot project, and the first phase of that pilot project will focus on the Beaufort-Delta region, that they would be sending out fecal immunochemical tests, or FIT kits, out in the mail to those who met the screening criteria. During that announcement, the stats were only 16 percent of the eligible population of the Beaufort-Delta region participated in colorectal cancer

screening. This is less than the territorial average at that time of 21.9 percent and extremely less than the national goal of 60 percent.

Today, I would like to bring awareness to screening for colorectal cancer. Those aged 50 to 74 with no family history, those who have immediate family diagnosed, you are at an increased risk. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all residents to discuss this screening with their healthcare practitioner. We need to make sure that our residents are aware of the screening criteria and ensure that we see our screening rates rise so that we can prevent any further deaths for our loved ones. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TREE OF PEACE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, located in Yellowknife, has been serving Northerners with community and wellness programs that include educational, economic, recreational, and cultural activities for over 50 years. At the heart of their work is a deep respect for Indigenous peoples' cultural distinctiveness and the trauma created by the legacy of the residential schools. This positions the centre to be even more effective in the work they do than perhaps programs offered by the GNWT that may evoke feelings of colonialism and institutionalized racism.

In 2004, the Company of Young Canadians, the economic wing of the Tree of Peace, finalized construction of the 15,000-square-foot building complex on 51st Street. The CYC owns the building, renting space to the centre for its programming. Construction of the complex was completed solely through fundraising efforts of the organization itself, without any funding from government; an amazing feat. However, the Tree of Peace does rely on government funding for its programs, and in my opinion, it is time to step up that funding to ensure that the centre and others like it can continue to be effective.

Community wellness and youth workers at the Tree of Peace have not seen a salary increase for several years. With an increasing population utilizing the programs provided by the centre as well as inflation and rises in the cost of living, personnel often go without raises so programming isn't cut, and like all teachers everywhere, educators are often purchasing supplies for their classrooms out of pocket. For example, the Alcohol Educator Program, which provides the ongoing

after-care support needed post-treatment, has been at the same rate of pay and program funding for years. Given the growing addiction issues in the North and the push for rehabilitation services, this funding needs to be reassessed as, currently, the program is constantly being monitored to not go over-budget, potentially leading to diminished services. In order to maintain growth and the economic self-reliance of the program, its funding needs to be increased.

Currently, the Upgrading Education Program at the Tree of Peace is exclusive to adults. With appropriate funding and a needs assessment, this service could be expanded to youths, as well. By working together with educators at the Tree of Peace, we can continue to expand on the educational needs and supports required to increase educational levels for residents in a culturally sensitive manner. The Tree of Peace Friendship Centre continues to play an active and inclusive role in our communities toward empowering youth, elders, and those in recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MINERAL RESOURCE EXPLORATION

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, mining has always driven the North's modern economy. When I was growing up, you were most likely either the kid of a mine employee or of a public servant. Today, mineral resources and the public sector are driving our territory's workforce and cash flow. Although the NWT is rich with opportunity, mineral exploration is stagnant. Natural Resources Canada estimates that mineral exploration in the NWT fell 54 percent over 2020, and while all mineral spending across Canada dropped during COVID-19, the NWT fell from the seventh highest in ranking across Canada down to the 11th.

Mining report cards produced from the Fraser Institute Survey of Mining Companies, the C.D. Howe Report, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives offer some insight. These reports suggest that the NWT is the second-lowest attractive location for mining investment in Canada. The NWT is known for long, uncertain permitting processes. Roughly one third of regulatory permits are issued in under six months in the Northwest Territories, yet Yukon and Nunavut can issue over 60 percent of permits within the same time frame. Our northern neighbours can double our pace of development in terms of permitting, Mr. Speaker.

What is most concerning, however, is the fact that the GNWT does not meet their own timelines,

creating further uncertainty for doing business in the Northwest Territories. Improved regulatory communication, transparency, and consistency are necessary to attract investors to our resource-rich territory, and these fundamental pillars to building an attractive policy environment for mining are the NWT's weakest policy points. Implementing the large infrastructure priorities identified in the mandate of the 19th Assembly, such as the Slave Geological Province Corridor and the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project, are not feasible unless there are large-scale resource development projects to support them.

Mr. Speaker, diamond production has reached its peak, and private investment in the NWT has been steadily declining for years. How is the GNWT turning the tide on this trend? Will the GNWT effectively increase transparency and consistency in the regulatory process, and how will the GNWT improve its own internal timelines in the regulatory process? I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment about specific efforts to increase investor confidence and bolster exploration and mining in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN GOVERNMENT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Consensus government, at its core, has a transparency problem, and it not an easy problem to solve without all of us in this House making some sacrifices for the public good. In our system, Regular MLAs are awarded a great deal of input into decision making. We see draft budgets, draft business plans, draft budgets, and draft legislative proposals, and we are given ample time to comment and provide input to those draft decisions. In many cases, Mr. Speaker, Cabinet actually listens to Regular MLAs, and I commend them for that. I understand that some Assemblies have done better than others at this.

However, Mr. Speaker, whenever something is draft, it is marked "confidential" and any discussions take place in secret. A by-product of this is that most decisions, by the time they are made public, much of the hard work and debate has been done. This often results in an anomaly where we pass things in this House with little or no comment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to note that this is not any better in a party system where the solution is simply not to share information with the opposition, and sometimes things become public all at the same

time as a surprise to opposition MLAs and the public. Clearly, this is not a solution to the problem, but it is often framed as the alternative. If MLAs are unhappy with doing business planning in secret, then they can wait and review a finalized document in public, but changing finalized Cabinet documents is a rare and difficult occurrence.

Mr. Speaker, the real solution here is a large dose of transparency at all levels. A dose of transparency that requires all of us becoming much more comfortable working with draft proposals publicly. We also must be much more comfortable speaking of when we failed to act.

The GNWT being an inherently risk-adverse organization, often the decision to do nothing is the most important and the most common. As an example, Mr. Speaker, our Affirmative Action Policy has not changed in some decades. However, if you weed through the multiple committee reports and you glean that it has probably gone to Cabinet multiple times, or at least to committee, and yet, nothing has been done. From the public's perspective, no change or effort to change such an important policy has ever occurred, yet repetitive decisions to fail to change it are often what has occurred.

Mr. Speaker, much of the work we need to do is set out in the GNWT's open government policy. However, we have heard little what the steering committee for that policy does, being made up of public servants who ironically meet in secret. One part of that work is an open data portal. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance on how we can become a more open government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RENTAL ASSESSMENTS IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I'd like to bring up the rental assessments for our local housing authorities back in the Delta or across the territory. I'm getting a lot of constituents coming into my office and asking why aren't they able to go and get their rental assessment redone and have it done soon because the high cost of living back home for all your bills, your power, your food, everything that comes up with that. That being said, when they're going in, it's not being done.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Minister today to pass on to make sure all local housing authorities are given notice to assist the constituent or the renter when they come in because everybody back home are seasonal workers, most of them, and anything

helps from cost-of-living, extra funds for anything that help to pay our power bills and everything, just day-to-day lives from people back home.

Today, I'm asking the Minister that making sure that she's getting her local housing authorities across our territory, when somebody comes to the housing office, to make sure and asking for an assessment, it gets done that day. I will have questions for the appropriate Minister at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BILL C-92: AN ACT RESPECTING FIRST
NATIONS, INUIT AND METIS CHILDREN, YOUTH
AND FAMILIES

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Today, the federal government, I'd like to talk about it. I'd like to ask the questions to the federal government about: when you look at the legislation 292, it is called 292 today, I'd like to, I will ask the Minister of Health and Social Services [Translation ends] National Aboriginal Day, June 21st, marks the second anniversary of a very important new federal law. I refer to Bill C-92, An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families.

Mr. Speaker, this landmark federal legislation acknowledges that inherent right of Indigenous people through jurisdictions over Child and Family Services. This includes foster care, child apprehensions, and other forms of family interventions.

Among other things, Mr. Speaker, Bill C-92 establishes procedures for orderly transfer of this authority from the colonizing government to the relevant Aboriginal governments across the Northwest Territories. It also provides for funding agreement to cover the costs of administering the devolved services.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good law, one that is recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, Mr. Speaker, its successful implementation requires the cooperation and goodwill of this government, also provincial governments that are involved. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I intend to question the Minister of Health and Social Services about how this act is being rolled out here in the Northwest Territories. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
APPLICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION POLICY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I'm going to talk about the Affirmative Action Policy and how it is not being evenly applied across all departments within the Government of the Northwest Territories. What I mean is that I have brought several constituency issues pertaining to the Affirmative Action Policy to the attention of the Minister responsible for human resources. Oftentimes, the Minister will defer any answers on these particular enquiries to the department or Ministers who are doing the hiring. Through my work on these issues, it has come to my attention that there is not an even application of the Affirmative Action Policy taking place across the government. There seem to be a lot of gaps and loopholes, which allows the government to work around the Affirmative Action Policy.

For example, Mr. Speaker, recently, within the Department of Lands, there were three vacant positions, one of which a constituent of mine had applied to. My constituent applied and was denied because she was told she was inexperienced. My constituent felt she was overlooked, so she asked me to intercede on her behalf to see whether affirmative action was properly enacted for that position. I later found out that the position in question was filled by a direct appointment.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not okay with this. There is something wrong with this picture. Some people argue that the direct appointments are a good thing for Indigenous people as it provides an alternative means of hiring Indigenous candidates into government positions. However, direct appointments could also create the opposite effect and can act as a loophole around the Affirmative Action Policy.

Mr. Speaker, our government and all its departments can say all it wants that the Affirmative Action Policy is being properly enacted, but how do we know that that is, in fact, true. If it's up to each department to regulate itself regarding affirmative action, how are hiring decisions being tracked, measured, and overseen in accordance with this policy? Where is the accountability and transparency in that? I will have questions for the Minister of human resources at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 608-19(2): COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions are for the Minister of health. Can the Minister confirm how decisions are being made with respect to the vaccine rollout, more specifically the second dose? Is it at the sole discretion of the Chief Public Health Officer, or is there a vaccine working group? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this issue, because it is one that I have heard discussed quite often. The Chief Public Health Officer is the staff person who is ultimately responsible, but she doesn't work in a vacuum. She works with colleagues across the country. She works with colleagues in her office. She regularly consults community and Indigenous leaders. She also receives advice from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. She uses a variety of information sources to look at the decisions she makes about priority groups for vaccination and, as has emerged recently, the timing of second doses based on the supply interruption by the manufacturer. Thank you.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Can the Minister confirm if there was a decision made by the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to forego the administration of a second dose of the vaccine in favour of providing as many NWT residents with a first dose?

HON. JULIE GREEN: As a matter of fact, that did not happen. The people who are receiving a second dose of their vaccine are doing so within the recommended 28-to-42-day time frame, even though we did receive fewer vaccines than we had hoped at the beginning of February, we have now received plenty of vaccine. In some cases, people are closer to the end of the 42-day time frame, but nobody was shortchanged a second dose because of rolling out first doses.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Can the Minister confirm the number of persons who have had their second shots delayed due to the delay in receiving the vaccine from the suppliers?

HON. JULIE GREEN: All residents should be able to receive their second dose within that 28-to-42-day time frame. I am not aware of people going over that unless they are unavailable to have the second dose because they are out of their

community or out of the territory. To the best of my knowledge, there is no delay in this area.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister provide us with an indication of the efficacy of the vaccine when receiving a second shot after the 28th day and up to the 42nd day? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: The vaccine is not an off-on proposition. When it enters the body, it creates antibodies to fight off the COVID-19 infection. It continues to create antibodies from the 28th day, from the 42nd day. The second dose is really a booster. Having said that, as the Member is well-aware, this is a very new vaccine, and there is not a lot of information about the maximum interval between doses. What we do know for now is that there is no problem extending up to day 42.

There are jurisdictions that are experimenting with a greater interval than that, but we are staying with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommendation, which is that the second dose be given between 28 and 42 days. In terms of how effective it is, the vaccine is reported to be 92 percent effective 14 days after the first dose. As I say, it continues to build. Anyone who is over the 42 days will not have to restart their vaccine series. They will be able to get the vaccine when they are ready to get it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

QUESTION 609-19(2): APPLICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of human resources tell us if her department is ensuring that the Affirmative Action Policy is being evenly applied within all departments of the government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every department is responsible for their own hiring. What they would do, then, is bring in the Department of Finance and human resources. We are there to, indeed, support that process and to work with them to make sure that, in fact, the Affirmative Action Policy is being properly applied. I certainly am confident that that does happen. Every time these questions come through my office, we

are able to review and to look at and to ensure that the policy is being applied. The short answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Can the Minister tell us if the affirmative action strategy applies to all departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: It certainly does.

MS. MARTSELOS: Some people believe that direct appointments are beneficial for Indigenous P1 individuals. Can the Minister tell us if she agrees with that statement?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: The direct appointment process is one that is quite carefully used. There are specific rationales, and only under those specific rationales can a department request a direct appointment. Then the rationale needs to be, of course, reviewed by the Minister before supporting the request for direct appointment. It is most often used, Mr. Speaker, for situations where a competition has been held and a position can't be filled. It's been used to make use of the tools and techniques, such as Indigenous Gateway and internship programs, and to try to support those individuals here in the Northwest Territories who are advancing through these avenues that we have.

For example, the numbers I have this year for the 19th Assembly are, indeed, that direct appointments do tend to, far and away, favour affirmative action candidates. Based on that information, it is a system. It's one tool. It's not the only tool, but it is one tool by which we are trying to ensure that the Government of the Northwest Territories can be responsive and flexible towards its goal of having a representative work force.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to bringing my concerns about the direct appointment process to Cabinet to determine ways to improve direct appointments to ensure greater transparency and accountability? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, absolutely. Early on in the process of becoming a Minister, this is a policy that I wanted to have reviewed to understand better, and I agree. It is, as I said, a tool that can be utilized. It should be utilized towards the goal of being a representative work force, and if it's going to be a tool, then it should be better understood. I would certainly commit to bringing the concerns forward, but what's more, I will commit to looking for a way that we can make its use more transparent so that it is more understood how it actually works. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

QUESTION 610-19(2):
GAPS IN EMERGENCY SERVICES

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Just in light of my Member's statement on Friday about service gaps for emergency services, the Minister of Health and Social Services gave me a little bit of direction of where to go with this. I have some questions for the Minister of MACA. I live in a small community, and I wanted to take first aid training or first responder training. Where would I go? Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was a question that I did bring back to my department, and I wanted to know because, when governments are established, industry, whatever, we are supposed to have a safety arm to every organization, making sure that we do offer those services. Bringing that back to the School of Community Government, I asked about the fire safety training that we do have and the first aid, looking at the procedures that we do have to encourage work safety. Within the School of Community Government, we do offer first aid, and we do offer safety training, as well, also looking at the fire safety, as well, and looking at the training that we provide significantly to making sure that we do provide safety when fighting fires.

There was also training that was supported in terms of the automated external defibrillator, training in response to a motion of the Legislative Assembly in 2014. MACA tapped into some federal funding and supported the purchase and implementation of the automated external defibrillator to mass-assembly buildings. We also supported training to the use of the defibrillator. This was done through a partnership with the NWTAC, NWT Fire Chiefs Association, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. As part of this project, it was recommended that all communities note the location of the automated external defibrillator training in their emergency plan when they are looking at submitting for their capital plan. I brought this back to my department to make sure that safety is taken very seriously, and we have acknowledged the need in the smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Before we move on, colleagues, please just take your time. Our interpreters are having a little difficulty keeping up, so just be mindful. Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that very thorough response. This training is so important. I spoke with one of my constituents who works with the volunteer fire department for Fort Resolution, and she said it runs out. It's very important that we keep our training updated. Even through times of COVID, life still has to go on, so I just thought I would speak to that. I commend all of the volunteer fire fighters and first responders in our communities. It's a tough job and very, very necessary, very needed. My next question for the Minister: does MACA track the number of people trained in first aid training and first responder training in the Northwest Territories?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Since the training is an opportunity that is offered through the School of Community Government, MACA does keep a list of people who we have trained. However, if they have received training outside of Municipal and Community Affairs, the School of Community Government, we do not keep track of those numbers if it's provided privately.

MR. NORN: Again, thank you for that. Going back again, I heard AEDs mentioned, so does MACA keep track of how many AEDs we have in our smaller communities?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: That information, I do not have on hand, but I will follow up with the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, I am going to keep pressing for this, like I said, a very glaring service gap. I am going to keep on pressing, make sure that we get some real responses. That is something so undignified, so maybe I will leave it at that. Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Would the Minister like to respond? I will take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 611-19(2):
LEGISLATIVE LETHARGY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today, I spoke of the legislative lethargy of our Cabinet. We are about a third of the way through our term, and no bills of any substance have been proposed by Cabinet. Changes have been promised to the Education Act, to implement UNDRIP, to bring our resource management into this century, and more. Can the Premier explain whether there is any substantive legislation planned for the current sitting? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to defer that question to the Government House Leader, who is responsible for legislative initiative, Minister Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Government House Leader.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the beginning of every sitting, I provide the Regular Members of this House with a list of the legislation that is likely to be introduced. This sitting, there was no legislation planned to be introduced. That said, we are hoping to get a couple of bills introduced at some point in this sitting. However, those have to go through Cabinet, so I cannot say whether or not they will happen. Whether or not they are "substantive" according to the Member's definition, I am not sure, but we hope to have some work for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Government House Leader for that answer. Maybe we will get a couple of bills. However, I spoke about how this is supposed to be the Legislative Assembly, not a debating club. Can the Government House Leader tell us when any significant legislation is going to be introduced to put our committees to work?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I hope the committees are busy working right now. There is a lot of work to do outside of legislation, despite being the Legislative Assembly by name. Again, any bill that is introduced is subject to Cabinet approval, so I cannot say that a bill will be introduced by this time. However, any member of the public can go and look at the four-year business plans put out by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Every single department lists their legislative initiatives with their proposed dates when they want to introduce the bills. Now, has there been some slippage? Yes, there has, but we were dealing with something for the past year that took a lot of our energy. Some of the departments with the heaviest legislative loads for this term were some of the hardest hit and most affected and were busy with other things. Despite that, we have still had twice as much legislation as the previous Assembly by this point.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank my colleague, the Government House Leader, but who could forget the legislative landslide in the last eight months of the last Assembly? I personally spent most of the summer away from home, in committee travel, meetings, and a final sitting of the House in August where one clause-by-clause review of a bill stretched on for four-and-a-half hours, until past

midnight. Who could forget that, Mr. Speaker? What is Cabinet doing to prevent a repeat performance?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I, for one, will not forget that, and I remember all of the Member's amendments that made it stretch out until past midnight. However, we did learn from the last Assembly. We have asked departments to give us more realistic timelines for legislation and to be brutally honest and look at themselves in the mirror and say, "Can we get this done at this point?" Right off the bat, we had a more realistic list. We are also using technology to ensure that we can track our legislation better. We are one of the first divisions in the government to start using the APEX Database, which is something that is going to be rolling out. It is taking some time because we are the first to use it and there are some technical challenges. That is going to help, as well, and we will all have access to the legislation. I also want to point out that, yes, in the last Assembly, there was a lot of legislation at the very end and that some of the departments that put forward that legislation now have regulations to work on for this entire term and are not putting forward legislation. There is another component to it, as well. It's not all acts; there are also regulations.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Government House Leader for giving me credit on the clause-by-clause review of that faulty legislation in the last Assembly. Of course, we are looking forward to getting some regulations, as well. While I can understand that COVID may have delayed some of our legislative work, I am more than happy to ensure that departments and the government as a whole have the resources to start legislation flowing. Can the Government House Leader confirm whether there are the human resources and capacity necessary to begin to turn the legislative taps on? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: It's always a challenge to develop legislation. In addition to the people to just sit down and write the legislation, there are some bills that need a lot of consultation before they are ever bills. People have to fly into communities to talk to communities. There is a lot of work and a lot of hours that go into developing these. That being said, we do have the capacity. It's a matter of prioritizing, and so I would just ask that the Member keep down the number of additional requests he is making of the government so that we can prioritize that legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 612-19(2):
RENTAL ASSESSMENTS IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just hearing that debate, you have to remember we work for the people of the Northwest Territories, and we have to respect everybody in the House in regard to working together. Today, Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of housing. We have seasonal workers in the communities who are coming home from work. When are they eligible to get the reassessment done on their rent? How quickly can we get that done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The local housing authorities have been given the direction to follow through with the rent assessments, moving month-to-month. I have recognized the seasonal workers, as well, and looked at the increased rent that they could be paying over the duration of their current employment at that time. We have also looked at the rent assessments and the CRA reports to try to work on lowering our rent requirements throughout the year. I just instructed the LHOs and LHAs throughout the Northwest Territories to make sure that they fulfil those requirements for our tenants in the public housing units and make sure that they look at the rent assessments and make sure that we consider the tenants who are not permanent employees, indeterminate employees, who have been working seasonally, make sure that their rents are calculated month by month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: I thank the Minister for that. When the seasonal worker goes in to get a reassessment in the LHOs, local housing authorities, are they able to do that right then and there when they are asked, or do they get told to come back another day? That's the problem we've been having. Is the LHO able to do that assessment that day?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I'm not too sure about the paperwork and the details that have to be submitted when completing a rent assessment, but the current information that I do have is that these assessments can be done at the local community level, with the support of the district offices and with the support of headquarters.

MR. JACOBSON: Could the Minister commit to me today that she will talk to the LHOs in the Delta, in

my riding, to make sure, when somebody is going in to get an assessment, that they work together with them to get that assessment done? Because the cost of living is a lot more than it is here in Yellowknife, and anything helps, like I always say, for the constituents that we represent. If the Minister could just commit to working with our local LHOs in the Delta for that?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I will commit to that. I will have the district office just remind the LHO offices in the Beaufort-Delta, in Nunakput, and throughout the Northwest Territories that rent assessment should be done month-to-month, if we have seasonal workers occupying our public housing units, and they should be done without any complications.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 613-19(2):
COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I spoke about the pilot project in the Beaufort-Delta where they were going to be mailing out the FIT kits. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services advise me or this House if the pandemic delayed this pilot project rollout as planned? If not, have the rates increased in screening in our region? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start for thanking the Member for drawing attention to this Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. It's a very significant problem all around, but especially in the Beaufort-Delta. She will be pleased to know that the program rolled out as planned in January of 2020. The response rate was low in Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok, so the kits were sent again in November of 2020 to those communities. In total, there were 1,157 FIT kits distributed, and the screening rates in the smaller Beaufort-Delta communities, that is, excluding Inuvik, doubled from 7.9 percent to 15.64 percent, and screening participation rates for the whole Beaufort-Delta region, which, of course, includes Inuvik, rose from 6.7 percent to 11.8 percent overall. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you to the Minister for that, and I'm glad to hear that that rolled out as planned. Those who are at risk require a colonoscopy. Can the Minister provide what the wait lists were before the pandemic hit for colonoscopies in Inuvik and Yellowknife?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I don't have information about what it was, but I do have information about what it is. Right now, the wait time from a positive FIT test to colonoscopy through the Territorial Colorectal Cancer Screening program in the Beaufort-Delta is approximately 88 days, so let's say three months. Our target for improvement is to ensure that patients are seen more quickly than that, and we are now working on a pilot project that will help us to identify where we can make improvements to reduce the amount of time that it takes to go from a positive test to a colonoscopy.

MS. SEMMLER: One of the issues that I know sometimes happens in the Northwest Territories is that, if you can't get in in Inuvik, because we do have an endoscopy room, you get bumped to Yellowknife, or vice versa. I'm just wondering, with the sterilization issues that happened at Stanton, did this impact any of the wait times for people accessing colonoscopies in our endoscopy rooms?

HON. JULIE GREEN: No, that's not a factor. The reprocessing of endoscopy instruments is in a different machine than that which was giving us trouble through the fall.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that. That's good to hear. I am very concerned about the pandemic's impact on cancer diagnosis and treatment, due to travel restrictions, appointment availability, and fear of travelling out of the NWT to the Alberta Cross Cancer Institute. Can the Minister tell us if the department has had these issues, and how are they handled? Because I would really hate for residents to be delayed for diagnosis and treatment, which could decrease the risks for survival. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: All services remain available now, as they were before the pandemic started. The travel restrictions have not impacted residents' ability to travel to Alberta, to the Cross Cancer Institute for Cancer Treatment, although people may have decided not to go because they were concerned about the number of infectious cases in Edmonton. There is regular communication between the Alberta Cross Cancer Institute and NWT residents, and that is facilitated by medical oncology and haematology oncology. These are two cancer speciality clinics that continue to be offered virtually at Stanton Territorial Hospital, and this is done in coordination with the cancer nurse navigators and oncologists. These clinics are managed virtually, unless the oncologist decides that the person has to be seen in person. Required diagnostics and virtual appointments are made in the NWT as often as possible because we are

aware that some people are leery about travelling into regions with increased COVID infection rates, but all of these services are available to residents of the NWT, just as they were before the pandemic. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 614-19(2):
HAMLET OF ENTERPRISE ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITIES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Enterprise is a proud community, and many residents lucky enough to find local jobs are counting their blessings. My question to the Minister is: in light of the gas bar business coming up for sale once again, is it possible to explore ownership of the business by the Hamlet of Enterprise? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can say that the Department of ITI has been recently quite involved working with the community to support some of their economic development programs and projects. The deputy minister has been there several times, as has deputy minister of ENR, working with the community, again, specifically on their economic development. I am confident that they can, again, reach out to the community, continue that involvement, and continue to support them in looking for economic development opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: I am aware of ENR and ITI being into the community, but that was strictly to discuss another issue dealing with an AWP. The ownership of the gas bar, the convenience store, and the motel creates the jobs for residents of Enterprise, and it's always going through different ownership throughout the years. This is a really great business opportunity for the hamlet itself since no one else would be able to take it on. I am just wondering if it's possible for ITI and MACA officials to meet with the hamlet to discuss the options available for the purchase of this business opportunity with the help of ITI and MACA.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: To the extent that there can be support from ITI with economic development or support to individual businesses with respect to their business plans, whether it's through economic development type supports or whether it's through the BDIC, with respect to, for example, loans, I can certainly ensure and direct the department to reach out so that they have all the available supports there for them.

As far as the government actually stepping in to buy private market assets, I don't want to give any false hope that that is not likely to be something the government is going to be doing, but we are there to support the private industry. We are there to support private businesses, and as I can say, if there is this reoccurring challenge, then yes, I will certainly ask that the department follow up with the business and make sure that they are navigated to the right supports that are available for them.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi to the Minister for that answer. I spoke about tourism potential for the hamlet through an aggressive campaign of incorporating signage from the border leading up to the community. The hamlet has the right to advertise the falls as their own as these are in their background. They also have the right to compete with campground attendant contracts. Can the Minister commit to having their officials meet with the Hamlet of Enterprise to discuss these tourism initiatives, including discussion on the campground contract opportunities?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: It turns out that today, in fact, the tourism development officer from the South Slave is meeting with the SAO from Enterprise. I will personally follow up so that I can see what transpired in that meeting and will communicate with my colleague the MLA to let him know also what transpired at that meeting and to hopefully advance whatever projects might be discussed and whatever ideas might be discussed.

With respect to the campground contracts, those do go through a procurement process. I will follow up with the MLA to ensure that he is aware and that the SAO in the community is aware when those contracts are coming up so that everyone is well-placed to put themselves forward for those.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to the fact that Enterprise is the first community on Highway No. 1 from the border. It's sad to say there is no visitor information centre at Enterprise. I mean, goodness, we have all the ITI staff in Hay River, all the business advisors, and no one is speaking tourism business opportunities to the Hamlet of Enterprise. This is potential employment for the residents of Enterprise where there are limited jobs. Can the Minister commit to having all available staff meet with the Hamlet of Enterprise to realize the tourism marketing potential and associated businesses, including the campground contract opportunities? Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: As I said, it just turns out by happenstance there is a meeting happening today at the SAO level. I will follow up

on that and see where it gets to. There are staff across the South Slave who work on tourism.

Mr. Speaker, just a few years ago, I was told that, in fact, money had been advanced to the community of Enterprise to look at building visitor capacity. The project didn't go forward, but I certainly wouldn't want there to be any misunderstanding of the willingness of ITI to work with the community to see if they are interested in pursuing something and to see what funding might be available in one of the many different tourism supports and tourism programs that we have as applicable.

Again, I will certainly follow up. If sufficient information didn't get through today at the meeting that they are having, then we will make sure that the staff in the South Slave offices are there and available to the people of Enterprise, to the community of Enterprise, so that they can make good use of it. To the extent that we can promote tourism in the North, that is the goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 615-19(2):

FUNDING FOR THE TREE OF PEACE AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier. Many of the non-governmental organizations, like the Tree of Peace and others, provide services or subcontracted services to accommodate residents that perhaps are not able to get them otherwise. As I mentioned, many of these workers have not had a cost-of-living or salary increase in many years. While I understand the GNWT does not fund these organizations directly, can the Premier tell me what she is doing to ensure that there is more funding for NGOs that support our communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within my department, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, as long as the budget gets approved, there is extra funding for the Status of Women and Native Women's Association that we proposed for this Assembly. Also, in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the GNWT did increase the NGO stabilization fund by actually doubling it from \$350,000 to a fund of \$700,000 now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: I am glad to hear that. I hope the Premier will consider doubling it again. My next question has to do with the alcohol educator program, which has had the same rate of program

funding for years. Again, I understand that it is not directly funded, at times, from the GNWT. However, given the increased need for rehabilitation services that these NGOs often provide, can the Premier commit to instructing her Cabinet to increase funding to NGOs that do provide rehabilitation and after-care services?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I can't stand here and give direction to a department to actually increase their funding. Departments have various reasons why they do funding based on capacity, based on needs, based on assessments, all kinds of reasons. What I can say, though, is that I come from the NGO world before I came here, for many, many years. I hear what the Member is saying. One of the biggest things that I hated when I came in was that smaller NGOs that don't have the capacity often don't get the money. Larger NGOs that have either the capacity, or are smart enough to get MLAs on board, are actually getting increases, and that's not fair, Mr. Speaker. I brought it up in the last Assembly, and I brought it up in this Cabinet, and I will see it during this term: we need a fair, equitable model to be able to fund NGOs so it's not the squeaky wheel that gets the grease, that NGOs have a formula. That I will commit to in the term of this government.

MS. NOKLEBY: I am really glad to hear that. I do agree that the squeaky wheel gets the grease in the North often. I do appreciate the look to make that fair across the board. One thing I often hear when speaking with NGOs is that they are in this constant loop of having to apply for project funding or funding that has a lot of restrictions or has to be used in a specific manner. Oftentimes that funding will then be removed a year or two later when the program has actually started going. It then becomes somewhere within the NGO to find the money to continue on with the works. I think a lot of that speaks to the lack of core funding for our NGOs. They probably know the best way to spend their own money. My question is: what is the Premier going to do to ensure that NGOs like the friendship centres have stable, adequate core funding to cover operating expenses and pay their staff wages given the recent cuts in her budget to friendship centres?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: There's a conversation. Core funding is a sensitive topic, I understand. Core funding is something, that's an issue. Like I said, I came from the NGO world. The NGO that I was administrating got \$30,000 a year core funding for 30 years, Mr. Speaker. We were feeding women hotdogs if we were lucky enough to buy them. NGOs got huge core funding. I'm not going to say that we're going to increase core funding right now. I need a formula that says, this is what's fair for NGOs, and that, I can commit to.

Kind of a second question within that is the friendship centres. Absolutely, I worry about them. They provide valuable services. What I've committed to doing is: I don't have an increase in my budget for it this year, but what I have committed to do, and I've already talked to my department, is we're going to meet with the NWT and the Nunavut Friendship Society and see if there's a way that we can actually support them to get the capacity. The original funding was to build capacity for fundraising. It wasn't to be core funding. Evidently, it worked somewhat in that they got a lot of money. Didn't work because they weren't sustainable in doing that. We're looking at other measures. Maybe, perhaps, I can second someone. We're looking at other ways that we can actually build the capacity so that they can be sustainable financially.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This might be more of a comment. I think that the Premier's comment sparks in me the thought of this conversation we keep having around the hoops everybody has to jump through and the fact that there does need to be dedication positions that are literally just there to apply for federal funding which is going to be the best method instead of all of us fighting over territorial money, which is very limited. More of a comment: I urge the Premier, if she's going to second somebody from her department, that that be their goal, is just to get more federal money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do appreciate that comment. I do think that it should be focused on federal funding, not only, but territorially as well. It kind of gave me a hint, and so maybe, I'll be looking at that position, a position, actually, that can work with NGOs, not just the friendship centres. I'm not committing, but I heard the remark, and I'm just going to start thinking my head around that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, the Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 616-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES OPEN GOVERNMENT PORTAL

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm following up on a commitment from the Minister of Finance who is responsible for the Chief Information Officer of a commitment to have an open government portal for the GNWT. My question is: when can we expect to see that open government portal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, the open government portal has been delayed somewhat. I had been hoping we'd be further along at this point and have some more information moving forward onto the portal. I can say at this point that, at least now, we do have the technology ready to roll out that will be implemented. What they are working on next is a data management framework. I acknowledge, and I must say, that the number of steps required to ensure that data is managed properly insofar as both being a collective of all of the different items of data and high data usages across different departments but also in terms of the data that may have personal information on it, but managing all of that and putting it out on the portal needs to be done carefully and cautiously. That work is, as I say, this is a status update of where it's at, and I will align that against the timeline and provide that back to the Member very quickly so that we have a sense of the updated timelines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I think, perhaps, the Minister should also ask the department update her briefing note because I'm going to read from the June transcript where it says by the Minister, "I will have a timeline by the time we are back in the fall as to how exactly this is going to unfold." "Fall" being 2020 there. We're in 2021, Mr. Speaker. My question is: what is the timeline for getting that timeline back to the House?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: If only all the things that I read were in a briefing note, my life would be simple. No, this is not in the briefing note, Mr. Speaker, and it is being updated in real time. I can say right now, ISSS, which is responsible for the framework, is expecting to have that completed by fall of 2021, with the portal operational in 2022. I hesitate because, if there's any way that I can push that along a little bit, I certainly will. I am conscious that this is something that is a huge part of having a more open and transparent government. I do want to work towards having it available more quickly, but that is the current timeline: fall of 2021 for the framework and the portal to follow thereafter.

MR. JOHNSON: I'm happy to receive that timeline, and I look forward to this portal. My question is: do we have an idea of what sort of information we expect to initially populate our open data portal?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: At this point, that one, I am going to take back and say I will get back to the Member on it. I know there was some initial anticipation of what might get out there with respect to, for instance, the vital statistics and various health information. Again, subject to how the framework has unfolded and subject to the

application of that framework to the technology that is now landed on as being useful, I would like to confirm if, in fact, we are still going to proceed with the vital statistics and health information first or not. That was always the intention.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the issues I've struggled with in this work is it kind of seems to be all over government. The open government policy lies with EIA; ATIP implementation, which requires a lot of open disclosure, lies with Justice; the actual records lie with Infrastructure; and the ISSS and the Chief Information Officer lie with Finance. My understanding is that there's a steering committee to kind of coordinate all this work. However, I've never seen any of the work of that steering committee. My question for the Minister is: can there be some public reporting of the open government steering committee? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: This should be really good news. The government is too easily told that we are siloed and don't work well together, but in fact, this is an occasion where, yes, there is information across departments. Multiple departments are high government information creators and drivers and users. The interdepartmental working group that includes the Bureau of Statistics, population, health, Environment and Natural Resources. There're ITI elements involved that have high use of information. This is an occasion where they are, indeed, working, and a very active group. Yes. Let me begin by certainly ensuring that we offer standing committee a briefing, and we can then take that feedback and determine whether there're yet further ways that we can speak to the work that is happening to advance open government but starting with a committee briefing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 617-19(2):

BILL C-92: AN ACT RESPECTING FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND METIS CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, I spoke about Bill C-92, federal legislation, the bill that just passed. This government has an important obligation under this Bill C-92, federal Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families. It sets a mandatory standard for territorial government when it comes to child apprehension and family intervention. It's also gives

the territory an obligation role in the devolution of Child and Family Services to Indigenous governments, so I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Could the Minister tell this House what actions were taken to coordinate her department's response to Bill C-92. What reviews and committees were established? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for highlighting this area. The department is very supportive of the federal bill, and we are working to ensure that it is rolled out successfully in the NWT. When the act came into force in January of 2020, my predecessor sent a letter offering briefing and discussion to all Indigenous governments. When I became the Minister, I repeated that offer, and I have raised it at every bilateral conversation that I've attended since I became Minister. The key to this piece of legislation is that the conversation has to be initiated by the Indigenous government or Indigenous government organization. It's not for us to tell Indigenous governments that it's time for them to create their own Child and Family Services law; it's for them to tell us that they are ready to do it. Thank you.

MR. LAFFERTY: That leads to my next question. As agreements are in place with Indigenous governments and provincial jurisdictions across Canada, we should be in that position, as well. Mr. Speaker, the primary instrument for devolving Child and Family Services to Indigenous people under Bill C-92 is a tripartite coordination agreement. This agreement is between an authorized Indigenous government, the federal government, and territorial-provincial government. There could be many tripartite coordination agreements in the NWT like Indigenous governments. Question to the Minister: how many of these agreements has the territorial government been a party to since the act was passed in the federal Parliament?

HON. JULIE GREEN: We received notice from one Indigenous government approximately a year ago that they were interested in beginning negotiations. We received notice from a second Indigenous government about a month ago. Neither of these conversations have reached the stage that the Member is talking about here, where we are negotiating a tripartite agreement. What we have done proactively as a department is adopted two new practice standards based on the federal act so that all children and families in the NWT have the benefit of these provisions, even before these agreements are put into place.

The first new practice standard has to do with the requirement to provide notice before taking a significant measure in relation to an Indigenous child or youth, so that would be notice that goes to the Indigenous government about a member of theirs. The second is a commitment to Indigenous children, youth, and families, and that has to do with supporting them through the family reunification process. We are very willing, more than willing, to enter into these negotiations. Just to say again: they need to be initiated by the Indigenous governments. They are funded by the federal government, and we are ready to do our part.

MR. LAFFERTY: The bill came into effect over a year now, and we are still talking about potential one or two Indigenous governments possibly coming onboard. We need to be proactive. We need to be reaching out to these Indigenous governments across the territory, similar to other provincial jurisdictions. It's already established, and any apprehensions, they are the first go-to, Indigenous governments. We should be acting on that, as well, Mr. Speaker. It's a complex matter, negotiating the agreement. It covers funding, liabilities, transition, a scope of policy to be transferred. What supports has this Minister's department put in place to assist northern Indigenous governments wishing to enter into these kinds of agreements?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Until these negotiations are complete and an agreement is reached, we are the service provider at the Department of Health and Social Services through our health authorities, including the Tlicho Community Services Agency. When Indigenous governments approach us to begin discussions about negotiations, we are very happy to provide them with a range of options which could be them creating and implementing their own law if they have the capacity to do it, or it could be a collaborative arrangement between the GNWT and the Indigenous governments.

To reiterate, at the time that the bill came into force, my predecessor wrote to every Indigenous organization; once I became Minister, I wrote to every Indigenous organization. I have been to approximately six bilateral conversations with Indigenous government and Indigenous government organizations, and in each one, I have talked about this legislation and invited them to take up the challenge. The major stumbling block, I am hearing, is capacity. People understand that creating a law, creating an implementation plan is a huge undertaking, and so I think there is interest. We do not, at this point, have anything that has started in the way of negotiations.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. The Minister alluded to lack of capacity building, lack of resource people within the system. It's time that we reinvest in these areas. We are talking about our children of the Northwest Territories, and this is a worthwhile investment. I certainly hope during the time 2021 comes to an end, where we have reached out to five regions, established an agreement. That is what I would like to see, Mr. Speaker. What role did the territory's Indigenous people play in bringing their children and family services up to the standards set out in Bill C-92? How were they involved? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: The development of the federal law was led, obviously, by the federal government, and they were assisted by the Assembly of First Nations. I know at least one person from the Member's region who participated in the development of this law by travelling to Ottawa and discussing it. The implementation of this law is being funded by the federal government. They have a pot of money, which, if I recall correctly, is around \$450 million to spend with Indigenous governments to get involved in this process and build capacity to take over Child and Family Services. I just want to reiterate: we want this to happen; we want Indigenous governments to take the lead in caring for their children. We are here to help, but the first step needs to be the step by the Indigenous government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 618-19(2):
MINERAL RESOURCE EXPLORATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The people who I serve or many of the people who I serve in Kam Lake generate their income either directly or indirectly from the mining industry, so my first question today I know is very important for them. Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment can speak to how the GNWT is working to increase mining exploration and development across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are quite a lot of initiatives underway. One of them that I think I have spoken to recently would be in terms of the Mining Incentive Program. That is a program that is within the government's mandate to increase funding to, and funding was increased and modified to adapt to COVID-19 so that it could be better accessed and more useful for those who are having to adapt their

systems and their processes to continue to explore, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there is a wide variety of other initiatives underway. Not knowing quite where the rest of the questions might go, I don't want to take all of the MLA's thunder, but the Mineral Resources Act, of course, we are looking to develop those regulations, looking to review the mineral development strategy and certainly continuing work in regions so that there can be regional mineral development strategies, so a number of things across the board, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: In my Member's statement, I spoke briefly about the Fraser Institute and their survey of the mining report. I am wondering if ITI has a desire to address the concerns outlined in this report, and if so, how will the GNWT effectively increase transparency and consistency in the NWT regulatory process?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: When that report came out, certainly, anytime there is a public statement of that kind, any kind of report-card-type document, we would certainly take that seriously and want to look at it and analyze it. I have actually already set up a meeting with the department to do exactly that. That said, Mr. Speaker, I also want to just ensure that the public messaging around what we are doing with our regulatory processes and the efforts within the department to provide pathfinding. There are staff specifically assigned to pathfinding, and there is already work being done to having a roadmap for those looking to bring new projects online. That work exists. I am conscious that, although, as I said, I'm going to take this report seriously, the department has a knee on it, the responses that were given in terms of permitting times, there were between five and seven responses. It might have been as little as five. Recently, at the online geosciences roundup forum, we hosted a forum where, in fact, the proponents of projects were saying they were impressed by the time in which they had their permits issued. It is a complex issue. Each project is unique. Each project is going to have its own challenges, but I believe we are taking steps already to improve the process and to continue to use the systems that we have and continue to make them even better.

MS. CLEVELAND: I appreciate the Minister's due diligence in having already set up that meeting and look forward to hopefully having a conversation about that with the Minister. In regard to the people who the Minister was able to converse with who were impressed by the timelines, perhaps the Minister can encourage them to participate in the survey next year and we can improve some results for the Northwest Territories in that report card. One of the things that was highlighted within that report card was that the GNWT wasn't even meeting their own timelines within the regulatory process. I'm

wondering if the Minister will commit to looking at the timelines associated with our own regulatory processes within the GNWT, look at the processes, how the department is working through them, and see if there is room for improvement and perhaps speeding up some of that process, as well.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That comment stood out to me, as well, and so certainly, again, that's one of the points of getting together with the department, is to identify where, in fact, there may be some areas for immediate work. It's not only us, of course. Up here, we also do rely on the federal government for part of the regulatory processes, and as for us, it's not only ITI that is responsible; the Departments of ENR and Lands are also involved. What I will do, as I've said, is, firstly, have the meeting with my department to look at what exactly is it that is at issue and then ensure that we are bringing all of the relevant departments into that conversation. It is always our goal to ensure that we are meeting our timelines and our processes, so to the extent that there is a challenge, we are going to figure out what it is and then find out the answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister alluding to the fact that she is willing to work with other departments. I think it's important to see, for other departments, what role they play within that process and how their involvement in that process affects the overall timelines, as well, so I appreciate that. It would be amazing if we could get our mineral exploration back to the level it was in the mid - to early 2000s. That would be very exciting. It feels different when the North is exploding with economic development. Everybody has some bounce in their step. There is less draw on social programs. There is more community involvement. Definitely, I think everybody here would be game for a ton of exploration and mineral development across the Northwest Territories. I'm wondering if the Minister would be willing to commit, for whatever dollar comes out of programming for mineral and resource development within ITI, to making sure that, if it comes out of one program within that section, it goes into another program within that sector? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Obviously, government budgeting is dear to my heart, but we're about to go into the process of reviewing ITI's budget and reviewing ITI's proposals for going forward in the next year. I don't think this is a question of a dollar-for-dollar in the Department of ITI that is going to advance mineral exploration alone. I appreciate the effort to look for creative solutions, look for ways to advance this. It is something that is already one of the priorities of the

19th Legislative Assembly. All of us know that this continues to be an anchor industry, and everyone is seeking solutions to see it advance. There is a lot of work happening. We are renewing the mineral development strategy. That's from way back in 2013. It's time to look at a new one. We are looking, again, as I said, at doing regional mineral development strategies to be led by regions themselves, to seek what supports they need to do that. There is the pathfinding; there are the road maps; there are mineral resources. It's not necessarily about whether there are enough dollars out there. This work is happening. I want to assure the Member that the work is happening; the work is under way. We know areas that are in need of some supports. We're trying to put our efforts into them, and I have every faith in my colleagues that, as we do the main estimates for ITI, if there is an area that I have described that doesn't have the resources, then I will have every chance to detail that and explain it in the course of the reviews. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Return to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 22-19(2):
FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS FOR THE EKATI MINE
TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to Written Question 22-19(2) asked by the Member for Frame Lake on February 8, 2021, regarding the financial obligations for the Ekati Mine to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

At the appropriate time later today, I will table two documents, the first that provides an overview of the GNWT's role in the Dominion Diamond insolvency process; and the second is a spreadsheet that identifies payments received as part of the Ekati Mine sale closing process, as well as outstanding amounts due to the GNWT. Notably, the GNWT has not forgiven any payments and nearly all receivables owed to the GNWT have been paid in full or agreement has been reached for payment by Arctic Canadian Diamond Company, or ACDC.

Regarding Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, or WSCC, assessment information you requested, we have confirmed with WSCC that this information cannot be released due to privacy issues.

Regarding your request for mining royalty information, this information is confidential in nature and not able to be publicly disclosed per company, as it would be releasing third-party information. However, I can tell you that all royalty reports were filed and all outstanding royalty audits were closed out prior to the sale closing. Dominion Diamond, ACDC, and the GNWT reached an agreement where amounts owing on these items will be paid in instalments between May 2021 and December 2021. Upon written request and the expiration of the appeal period on April 1, 2021, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment or ITI will release details of these royalties and payment terms to the Standing Committee of Economic Development and Environment in confidence. While Dominion Diamond and now ACDC are eligible to receive relief on all land tenures for 2020-2021 as part of the rent relief program, the total amount that they receive is confidential in nature as it would be releasing third party information.

Consistent with my Return to Written Question 15-19(2) in August, the GNWT has determined that other portions of the information you requested cannot be disclosed under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or the act. The GNWT has determined that Section 24(d) of the act applies to your request regarding tax liability, as public bodies cannot disclose information about a third party, gathered for the purpose of determining tax liability or collecting a tax.

The GNWT incurred costs of approximately \$130,000 for the external financial advisors who assisted with the thorough review of Arctic's ability to meet the regulatory, financial, and social commitments of the Ekati Mine, the structure of the sale, and the financial health of the surety providers. These reviews informed GNWT decisions on acceptance of new securities and assignment of the Ekati Environmental Agreement. Of this, about \$30,000 would have been incurred under normal circumstances, as we regularly review the health of the insurance companies backing our surety bonds. The GNWT has spent \$192,000 to date for external counsel. The GNWT's outside legal counsel attended court hearings and spoke in support of the government, northern workers, businesses, communities, and the NWT economy.

Finally, in terms of staff time, you are correct in implying that these past few months have been busy ones for those involved with the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, or CCAA, process and the extensive due diligence required to finalize the sale. Indeed, I will take this opportunity to thank those who worked collaboratively across the Departments of Finance, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Environment and Natural Resources,

and Lands to ensure that the interests of the GNWT, and especially those of the residents and businesses of the NWT, were of utmost importance and protected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Member for Nunakput.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 10-19(2): REPORT ON BILL 3: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC HIGHWAYS ACT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your hard-working Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is pleased to provide its Report on Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act and recommends it to the House.

Introduction

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Public Highways Act, clarifies the duty and liability of the Government of the Northwest Territories with respect to primary highways and an incident occurring on highways the GNWT does not construct, maintain, or control. On March 13, 2020, Bill 3 had its second reading in the house and was referred to Standing Committee on Environment and Economic Development. On June 23, 2020, committee reviewed the proposed bill. On August 25, 2020, and October 15, 2020, committee's review of the bill was extended.

Public Engagement

On August 19, 2020, committee invited comments on the proposed amendment from communities across the Northwest Territories, Indigenous governments, and businesses involved in the use and construction of roads. Committee received one written submission from the City of Yellowknife. Committee thanks the city for the submission.

What We Heard

Traffic Control Devices

The City of Yellowknife encouraged updates to the bill to outline maintenance requirements and associated liabilities to ensure appropriate accountability. Committee was also concerned the GNWT should clarify that it is liable for the presence, absence, and insufficiency of any traffic-control device. Committee confirmed the bill does not absolve the Minister from responsibility to

maintain in a reasonable state of repair those traffic control devices the Minister has erected.

Maintenance Standards

The City of Yellowknife expressed concern regarding liability related to loss or damage as a result of government's failure to maintain public highways. The city suggested proposed amendments should require infrastructure installed as part of a primary highway be adequately maintained to protect public safety.

Committee confirmed that the department maintains highways in accordance with the following standards:

- the Highway Maintenance Manual;
- the national guidelines from the Transportation Association of Canada; and
- the Guidelines for Safe Ice Construction booklet.

The Highway Maintenance Manual is the GNWT's standard of best practice. This manual is updated regularly. Committee requested and received commitment from the Minister to maintain the Highway Maintenance Manual to the Department of Infrastructure website. The city also had concern as to whether shoulders and pull-outs were considered part of primary highways, and committee confirmed as such.

Committee Concerns

Scope of the Bill Exceeds Objectives of the Bill

Committee was concerned that Bill 3 absolves the GNWT of responsibility for highways it controls but has not designated as primary highways under the Highway Designation and Classification Regulations. Committee was also concerned that the liability under the act was more expansive than Bill 3. The limitation of liability for primary highways has been addressed through committee's motion providing no bar based on alleged failure to maintain.

Public Hearing

On October 14, 2020, the department held a public hearing on Bill 3 with committee, which was broadcast and recorded on the Legislative Assembly channel. Standing committee and the department discussed concerns related to limitations of liability, highways under the control of the Commissioner not designated as primary highways, and maintenance standards. Committee thanks the Minister and her staff for appearing before committee.

Clause-by-Clause Review

The clause-by-clause review of the bill was held February 10, 2021. Committee thanks the Honourable Minister Archie and members of her staff for their appearance before committee. At this meeting, committee further raised concerns regarding the responsibility of the GNWT to maintain highways not designated as primary highways. Committee's concern regarding the responsibility of the GNWT to maintain liability for primary highways was addressed in Motion 1. At this meeting, committee proposed four motions as set out in Appendix 2. The Minister concurred with the motions.

Conclusion

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to Report Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act, as amended and reprinted, as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. This concludes the standing committee's review of Bill 3.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Member for Nunakput.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 9-19(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act, be received by the Assembly to be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. The motion is in order and is nondebatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions?

---Carried

The report on Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act, will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 329-19(2):
SUMMARY OF GNWT RESPONSE TO
DOMINION DIAMOND MINES CREDITOR
PROTECTION PROCESS AND EKATI DIAMOND
MINE SALE

TABLED DOCUMENT 330-19(2):
OUTSTANDING PAYMENTS DOMINION
DIAMOND GROUP OF COMPANIES/ARCTIC
CANADIAN DIAMOND COMPANY AS OF
FEBRUARY 3, 2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 331-19(2):
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - PUBLIC
PROCUREMENT POLICIES FOR THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 332-19(2):
DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE REVIEW OF
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT POLICIES FOR THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 333-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
494-19(2): ECONOMIC RECOVERY

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Return to Written Question 22-19(2), I wish to table the following two documents: "Summary of GNWT Response to Dominion Diamond Mines Creditor Protection Process and Ekati Diamond Mine Sale;" and "Outstanding Payments Dominion Diamond Group of Companies/Arctic Canadian Diamond Company as of February 3, 2021."

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: "Executive Summary - Public Procurement Policies for the Government of the Northwest Territories;" "Discussion Paper for the Review of Public Procurement Policies for the Government of the Northwest Territories;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 494-19(2): Economic Recovery." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 334-19(2):
LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 24, 2021, FROM
MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES TO MINISTER OF HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES REGARDING INCREASED
FUNDING FOR MIDWIFERY SERVICES IN THE
2021/2022 BUDGET

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following letter from the Midwives Association of the Northwest Territories, dated February 24, 2021, to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding increased funding for midwifery services in the 2021-2022 budget. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Thebacha.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 29-19(2): SYSTEMIC RACISM

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to review its policies and practices for racial and cultural bias, especially as they relate to education, Health and Social Services, Justice, housing, and government hiring; and further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notions of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act; Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2), Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020; Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election; Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund; Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; and Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, Department of Health and Social Services, and then the Department of Infrastructure. Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we are continuing on with the Department of Health and Social Services. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you get the witnesses in, please? I just about forgot. Thank you. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair: Mr. Bruce Cooper, the deputy minister of Health and Social Services, and Ms. Jeannie Mathison, the director of finance. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you and welcome. All right, committee. We will begin where we left off, with the Department of Health and Social Services, out of territory services on page 188. Are there any questions? Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I am looking at page 189, addictions treatment facilities. The 2019-2020 actuals were \$2,482,000, and moving on from there, they are flat-lined at \$2,096,000. I am wondering if there was anybody sent out during the 2020-2021 fiscal year and if that is the correct number. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. COVID did have an impact on the number of people who sought facility-based treatment in the South. The number, if I recall correctly, is down by about two-thirds. These are, of course, estimates. The actuals may be different. The spending actually varies according to the demand, and we know that there was less demand this year because of COVID. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Okay. All of my other questions are not budget-related, so I have no further questions on that. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Do I have any further questions on out of territory services on page 189? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 189. Out of territory services, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$77,888,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will move now to supplementary health benefits, beginning on page 191, with information items on page 192. Questions?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Madam Chair, I would like to call a different witness for this division, so I wonder if the Sergeant-at-Arms could escort Ms. Mathison out and escort the other witness in.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, can you please change the witnesses? Minister, could you please introduce your witness for the record?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Joining us now is Mr. Derek Elkin, assistant deputy minister of Health and Social Services.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome. Committee, we are on supplementary health benefits. Are there any questions from Members? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know there has been discussion previously in this House and in the department about the possibility of providing supplementary health benefits to those who are without. That would be people who don't already have them through their employer, who are not covered under the medical Metis benefits here or the federal Indigenous benefits. Do we have a recent figure of how many people that would be? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's approximately 2,200 people. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Does the department have a cost estimate, or has any work been done to get a cost estimate of what it would cost to provide those 2,200 people some form of supplementary health benefits? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to refer this question to Mr. Elkin.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. To date, no, we have not undertaken a cost estimate at this point. As we go forward with review and look at what types of benefits would be covered under any possible changes, then we would explore it at that point in time.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is that there is some talk about including the Metis Health Benefits or the federal government providing funding and rolling that up into the current benefits provided to Indigenous peoples. Can I just get an update of whether the federal government has made any progress on that or any information the department may have? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. The department did a consultation with Metis organizations of the NWT about Metis Health Benefits just before Christmas. My understanding is that the results are being analyzed, and for further information, I am going to refer the question to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I certainly can't speak to where the federal government is in their deliberations, but I can advise that we have certainly been contacting them when we have an opportunity to discuss these issues, post-Daniels decision, particularly. We have been putting forward the position that Metis Health Benefits should be covered the same as NIHB. As yet, we continue to have our own Metis Health Benefits program. No leverage as of yet within our discussions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. My hope is one day the federal government will extend NIHB to Metis benefits and then that frees up \$3 million in our budget, and perhaps we can then find a way to extend it to those 2,200 other people. Along those lines, I look forward to the department doing that work and hopefully getting a cost estimate. Has any work been done about a

jurisdictional scan? Are there any other jurisdictions out there who provide some sort of supplementary health benefits to their citizens? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to refer the question to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you very much. Yes, we do jurisdictional scanning as part of our ongoing policy analysis. Certainly, there are an array of programs across the country, different approaches. Most in Canada are income- or needs-tested. We are certainly going to build on that jurisdictional analysis as part of the review that we are embarking upon of the program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just end with a comment in that I think we are a very unique jurisdiction in that half our population automatically falls under NIHB, and then the largest employer in the territory is the GNWT and their dependents. We end up extending health benefits to numerous other people. We end up with these 2,200 working poor who don't get health benefits. If you did this analysis, I imagine any other jurisdiction except, perhaps, Nunavut, it just wouldn't be feasible to provide everyone benefits with such a small amount of money. I just would encourage the Minister, during this review, I think there is a way to do this, and maybe it's creative negotiating with the federal government for some sort of territorial health benefit package that exists or looking at what other jurisdictions do where they needs-test it. I really encourage the department to take a serious look at this. I think it would be a great legacy to give the working poor Extended Health Benefits. Do we have a timeline for when that review is done? Madam Chair, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The first phase actually we completed last year. That had to do with covering drug costs, and the next phase is scheduled for work this year, but ongoing. There will be a very heavy public consultation component to this review so that we can hear from residents of the Northwest Territories about their expectations for coverage, and we can provide answers to them. For more detail, I will ask the deputy minister to continue. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Not much to add. It is our intention to have the review completed before the end of this session.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

MR. COOPER: I mean by the end of this particular Assembly, so end of government. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay. Thank you. We could do it by the end of session. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I certainly look forward to the results of that. I think there is also a bit of a national conversation going on with pharmacare, and I think the department is also looking at what is driving health costs everywhere. That's obviously a national conversation. In that regard, I see both medical travel and Extended Health Benefits have quite significant increases from the revised estimates. I will start with: can we get a sense of what is driving the cost in Extended Health Benefits? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. The biggest driver is medical travel. That involves both the costs and the volumes of scheduled air travel and inflation on the ambulance contract. That's what I am aware of. I am going to ask the assistant deputy minister if he would like to add more detail. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. As the Minister mentioned, under the Extended Health Benefits, which also includes medical travel for seniors, the medical travel pricing volume has been one of the factors. Also, while the overall cost of drugs has not gone up significantly, the high-cost drugs for a small number of clients has had an impact on our pharmaceutical costs. We are looking into that as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think one of the side effects of this pandemic is that we took a hard look at what medical travel was necessary. I know there has been work in the past for the department to sometimes avoid appointments in Edmonton where it's simply a pre-surgery consultation that takes an hour, and then

that person flies back. I know the department spoke earlier about a couple of great initiatives happening in terms of Telehealth and digital health. I am concerned that I am seeing \$2 million here, and I am seeing continued driving costs for medical travel. When can we expect some cost savings due to digital health and perhaps not necessarily always having to have people travel in the medical travel line item? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. My thought is that we will be able to get a better sense of this when this fiscal year ends, and we will have a year's worth of data. We know that there have been some successes as you have mentioned, but we also know that the digital divide is pretty deep in the NWT. It'll be interesting to see how all of that works out. It is a very expensive program. Of course, NIHB pays for Indigenous and related people. The GNWT pays for everyone else, and the cost there is \$45 million. If there were ways to make that cost come down, I think we'd all be doing the happy dance.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just wondering with the medical travel line item, is the department adapting for people who would choose to drive now out of the territory versus flying because they may feel more comfortable? Myself, I have upcoming medical travel in April, and I would prefer to drive. Am I going to be able to recoup any of the gas costs to do so? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: That's an interesting budget question. I'm going to ask the assistant deputy minister to provide an answer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Assistant Deputy Minister Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. Yes, under our current medical travel program, clients do have the option of flying or driving depending on their circumstance, and there are coverage rates for mileage and/or for the flight. There are limits. For example, if you choose to drive, your coverage will be up to the amounts of what it would have cost if you had flown, but people do have the option. We haven't done any analysis, but certainly, that would be the trend and change since COVID, yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I had heard from a few constituents, particularly older constituents, who then chose to make it kind of a weekend down with the spouse or something as they were going to have to self-isolate together anyways. I'm really glad to hear that, and probably should have done a little bit more of my own homework before I asked that question. Again, I'm assuming that you had said that the numbers are going up this year for both the Extended Health Benefits and the medical travel benefits. However, there seems to always be quite a range. Is this due to just it's difficult, again, to predict these numbers as was some of the explanation we heard the other day? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could you please ask Mr. Elkin?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. Yes. When it comes to forecasting, as you know, the main estimates are done almost a year ahead of when we are -- we're reviewing them right now, so we're basing it under information at the time. It is a best guess based on trends, and as the Minister said before, we would be looking at what are the impacts with COVID and will there be a change going forward. This is based on the information we did probably last summer, last spring. This is a forecast based on the previous number of years of trends.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can maybe the department comment a little bit on whether they do think it's going to go up or down? I'm just probably assuming healthcare costs always go up, but do they have any sort of idea which way they think it's going? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to refer this question to Mr. Elkin.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. Again, they have been trending up just based on the five-year average of number of clients and just the cost of the airfare. Again, the unknown will be what will be, going forward, the impacts of post-COVID, whether it's through the cost of airfare during recovery or with the impact of the change program if we start using

more virtual care. Those are things we're going to have to monitor over the next year or so.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The cost of the flights for people to Edmonton, did they change over the year due to COVID, or were they already set in place for the upcoming year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to refer the question to Mr. Elkin.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. The airfare travel rates are set through a standing offer agreement, both for medical travel as well as the GNWT travel, as well. Those are set for the period, so they won't change. They haven't changed during COVID because they were through an SOA, standing offer agreement, with the airlines.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. What is the amount of time left on the standing offer agreement, and are there provisions in it for them to raise the prices given that their operating costs have skyrocketed due to COVID? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is another question for Mr. Elkin. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. There was a new standing offer agreement government-wide in December of 2020. I don't have the information on how long. They're usually on an annual basis. Presumably, because it was December, it did factor in some of the costs that they're currently incurring. Again, I don't have that detail, but that's the latest SOA.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe the department could provide that SOA to us, to the standing committee, and maybe the one from before, just so we can see how those rates have increased? I would imagine that they would have to in order to continue to be able to run. I think at this time, I don't have any further questions, Madam Chair. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister, the Member asked for a commitment.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I'm not clear whether we can make this commitment or not, so I will ask Mr. Elkin to answer the question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. The SOAs are issued and managed through the Department of Finance through procurement shared services, so we would follow up with the Department of Finance to see. They aren't done by the department of health.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Any further questions?

MS. NOKLEBY: No. It's my understanding that SOAs are public, in the public domain, so I will look forward to following up with the Department of Finance. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am going to stick with medical travel on the heels of my colleague from Great Slave. One of the things we've been hearing lately is that, because a lot of our medical travel people travel to Alberta, that Alberta is actually saying to people that they must isolate in Alberta before returning to Yellowknife where they then isolate again in some cases. I'm wondering if the Minister can confirm if that is still happening for medical travel patients or not? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: What I want to confirm is: is this a budget question? Is there a cost involved that the Member is seeking?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Yes, it is a budget question because there is a cost to having to self-isolate in Edmonton afterwards, and my next question is going to be: who pays for it? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I will refer that question to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am actually going to have to pass it to the assistant deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. If patients are in an Alberta hospital, and they happen to be on what's considered a COVID ward, which is where there is a potential exposure to potential clients, then Alberta is requiring them to have 14 days self-isolation in an Alberta COVID isolation centre. I believe that's at the cost of Alberta, but we would have to confirm. For those patients that are just experiencing COVID symptoms and cannot get on the plane, we would pay, or the program covering their medical travel would pay. I believe it's Alberta Health who is paying, but we'd have to you confirm that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering if the Minister knows the rate of people, on a monthly basis, who are travelling to Edmonton who end up having to self-isolate in Alberta because they were on a COVID border or they have symptoms coming home. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I'd have to return with that information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. No. I appreciate that, and I appreciate the commitment of returning with information as to whether or not we are covering that or if that's being covered by Alberta because I think it will add a significant cost to our medical travel, especially if people are then coming home and then having to then self-isolate again. That would mean a month of self-isolating for people after a medical travel appointment. Is the department of health offering any kind of financial assistance to people who end up in a situation where they are having to self-isolate for a month for potentially a one-hour appointment down in Alberta? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not aware of any assistance that is being provided in that circumstance. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would imagine that there are some people who are in very stressful circumstances right now if they are having to isolate routinely. I think of people who are travelling down south for cancer treatment and are going on a regular basis or they have kind of regular specialist's appointments that they are having to go to. That would add a whole new level of stress to their family. I asked a similar question the other day, but I am wondering if the Department of Health and Social Services is looking at the cost of bringing up physicians for common ailments that people would have to travel south for, bringing up locums for that, and if that would come out of the medical travel budget or if it would come out of the hospital services or where that funding would come out of. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. I will start by mentioning that people who are regular medical-travel travellers are a priority for vaccination, and so there is an effort to ensure that they are not constantly inconvenienced by their medical travel. In terms of the cost of bringing doctors to the NWT, I will look at the deputy minister to answer the question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. This, the cost associated with physician services, and this would be a locum-type arrangement, is covered off in a previous section, under hospitals and physician services.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: No, I appreciate that. I just want to clarify something that the Minister just said. If somebody is vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine, does that have an effect on their need to self-isolate for medical travel or any other reason? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. The point of the vaccine is to reduce the severity of illness should it be contracted. In the NWT, we have not reduced isolation times based on having the vaccine, so the real point there is to reassure people about their safety in the event of infection. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you. I appreciate that. I just wanted to make sure that no assumptions were being made there. My next question is in regard to the Metis Health Benefits. I am wondering if the Minister knows how many people are covered by the Metis Health Benefits.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will ask the assistant deputy minister to answer that question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Assistant Deputy Minister.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. We have approximately 1,500 people registered under the Metis Health Benefits Program. Again, that changes periodically.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thanks very much, Madam Chair. One of the figures that was given earlier was \$250 for return airfare. I am wondering what portion of that or what portion of the amount above and beyond that is covered by NIHB. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. That is a federal program, but the assistant deputy minister will be able to answer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Assistant Deputy Minister Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. Again, we currently administer the medical travel for NIHB-eligible clients. We recover the copayment, which is \$200 each way, so \$400 round-trip, from the federal government, but we are currently incurring the remainder of the cost through our medical travel program.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering if the Department of Health and Social Services is currently negotiating with the federal government in regard to a new agreement to increase NIHB travel subsidies for the Northwest Territories. The reason I ask is, in November of 2020, Nunavut was successful in increasing their support for medical travel to the tune of \$20 million, so I am wondering if we can expect the same wonderful, wonderful announcement in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. I will refer that question to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are certainly very alive to the situation in Nunavut, and we are in active discussions with NIHB around ensuring that, where can we find equity, we find it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Are there any further questions from Members? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me how many Metis are actually eligible for the Metis Health Benefits in the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. When that question was asked about two minutes ago, it was 1,500, so I am going to say it's still 1,500.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is great to hear. Has the federal government paid any other jurisdictions with regard to Metis Health Benefits? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: No, I do not believe they have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is there any indication whatsoever that the federal government is actually going to contribute towards this, and has it been raised, for example, at FPT tables? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is no indication that the federal government is ready to pay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Madam Chair, that was one of my questions. I guess I snuck a couple in. Has this

issue been raised at federal-provincial-territorial tables with the federal government? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. Not in my time as health Minister. The FPT tables are predominantly preoccupied with the pandemic. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I am just trying to figure out: how do we get any traction on this issue? I think as my colleague from Yellowknife North said, it's \$2.8 million this year, which might help those people who actually do not get any benefits whatsoever. I don't know. Have we tried writing to the federal Minister? Is there any talk of a reference to the federal courts? I think there is a questions act or something where you can actually refer a matter for a ruling of the court in terms of jurisdictional matters and so on. Any sort of thoughts about what kind of strategy we can use to get the attention of the federal government on this? Look, I recognize we are in a pandemic, but clearly, this has been going on now for a number of years. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. I am not aware of anything going on with respect to that. Deputy Minister?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you. We, as a department, have certainly raised this issue with Indigenous services, but this is a matter of government-to-government relations and something that we also will be working with our partners in EIA on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I might have to ask the EIA Minister about it at some point, but that is all I've got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Any further questions? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I was just listening to some of the comments from my colleagues. One of the things I am hearing is the Non-Insured Health Benefits, NIHB. Just from my

experience living in a small community, especially when it comes to dental care, it's very tough to really have good dental care in our communities. I've spoken with some people, some of my constituents. It seems like this policy, when you put it in place, they might just rather pull your teeth and be done with it. It's really, really sad to hear. Where I'm going with this is: with the NIHB dental side of things, has the department noticed any changes or more costs associated with the NIHB policy changes in the last few years? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I'll refer that to the assistant deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Assistant Deputy Minister Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. We do work pretty closely with Indigenous Services Canada on the NIHB. As you know, we administer a portion of their programs on their behalf, medical travel, dental travel, medical supplies and equipment, vision. If we are aware of any costs that may be increasing that are having a cost impact on the GNWT in administering the program, we do enter into discussions with them to make sure that they are fully covering the costs. If there are overall costs of their program, I'm assuming that NIHB is monitoring that because they do cover those costs specifically, but again, we have ongoing discussions to make sure that we as a government aren't incurring extra costs related to administering their program. I'm not sure if that answers the question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. That kind of does answer a little bit about this, but I just want to make sure that my colleagues are aware that there are still some gaps there within it. I know that we go through these COVID pandemic restrictions and all that, and I'm glad to see that the Minister brought back some dental services into our small communities. That is sorely, sorely needed. We need to have more proactive measures like this because, even though there's COVID, life still goes on. We still have to keep our programs going. We still have to take care of our residents. Moving along, I had some questions about the Metis Health Benefits. I've listened to some of the questions here already, and my first question to the Minister is: how often does her department meet with the Metis leadership on finding ways to keep improving their health benefits? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. The Cabinet had a bilateral meeting with the Metis Nation in January, and this was an item on the agenda. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. No. That's good to hear, that they meet on a regular basis. In speaking with some of the leadership, they said there are still some gaps here that could be addressed. There was something mentioned from the federal side of things, as well, because anytime there are announcements made from Indigenous Services Canada in terms of health coverage, the effects cascade down to us, ultimately. Do these discussions take place at the FTP table? That's for the Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: What I understood is that the question is whether the GNWT meets with Indigenous Services Canada to talk about NIHB? Is that the question? Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Yes.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I haven't had a meeting like that, but that doesn't mean one hasn't happened. I will ask the deputy minister if he can elaborate. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: I'm afraid I don't have anything to add.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Anything further, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh?

MR. NORN: No, nothing further. If I have any questions, I'll do it offline. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about the NIHB, as well. With respect to dental care, I've been on the receiving end of just getting my teeth pulled because the first thing they ask you is, "What healthcare do you have? NIHB? Oh, sorry." With respect to that, there seems to be a discrepancy, or is there a discrepancy, in costing between status Indians who are Indigenous people who are from the Northwest Territories versus those who are living here, still under NIHB, but from down south? Are they included in the costs that you are showing here? For instance, the Metis, we have services for, say, whatever it was, 15,000, but that's for Indigenous Metis. If you're not Indigenous, then you don't have that service. Is that the same under NIHB with the

Indigenous First Nations? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I'm not sure whether we administer NIHB for non-NWT residents, but I'm sure Assistant Deputy Minister Elkin knows that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Assistant Deputy Minister Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. For the NIHB program, the portions we administer on behalf of the federal government, if there is an eligible NIHB recipient and they are accessing programs and they have an NWT healthcare card and are receiving services here, then yes, we will cover them through the program here. However, for example, if an eligible NIHB recipient is not from the NWT, they can access things like pharmaceutical programs here because they bill directly to the federal government. I'll have to check on the dental, whether or not we require an NWT healthcare card or whether or not it could be anybody who is eligible for NIHB.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the issues that come up in Hay River, as well, is because of the number of non-Indigenous Metis there. They don't have the same coverage as the Indigenous Metis. I look at NIHB, which covers pretty much all the First Nations across Canada, whereas what we have here for the Metis is for a specific group of Metis. The question, and I think maybe it's been answered, is: is the department looking at maybe looking at including the non-Indigenous Metis and looking for additional funds to ensure that all Metis are covered in the Northwest Territories under the Metis Health Benefits? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I'm not aware that we are considering covering non-Indigenous to the NWT Metis, and we find that ourselves. I would be surprised if we wanted to go to in that direction, given our escalating health costs as they exist now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We, as a government, use our own resources? We're not receiving federal dollars, then, to fund Metis Health Benefits?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's our tax money that is paying for those benefits. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Have we been in any discussions with the federal government and requested that they provide the funds to cover the Metis Health Benefits? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. That would be a conversation, I think, for Executive and Indigenous Affairs to have with the federal government, and I'm not aware that they are currently having it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions under supplementary health benefits? Seeing none, please turn to page 192. Health and Social Services, supplementary health benefits, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$35,262,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, we will now refer to the information items on page 194, 195, 196, and 197. Does committee have any questions under those information items?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Excuse me, Madam Chair. Could we switch witnesses again, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please switch out the witnesses? Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, we will not bring in the other witness if there are no questions from -- never mind. We will wait for the witness. Minister, would you please reintroduce your witness for the record?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I would like to welcome back Ms. Jeannie Mathison, the director of finance. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and welcome back. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I think it will be a really quick question, perhaps. I know that we asked a lot of questions last week about the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and the deficit that's in it. One of the things that I struggle with, and I think it was evident in the fact that I kept asking all last week, where different items from NTHSSA fell within that budget. I know that it's fairly new that we have a conglomerate of health authorities. I am wondering if there is any plan moving forward for the health authority to actually break out some of this \$314 million so that we can see what actually goes into that going forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is my understanding that the health authorities do do their own budgets, and they present them to us. We get a level of detail there about what their planned spending is. For more information, I will ask Ms. Mathison if she wants to add anything. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do table, annually, the authorities' budgets with a little bit more detail than we have here. That level of detail, of course, can be adjusted if it makes sense to provide a little bit more information. This template here is a template for the main estimates, as you know, and there could be conversations with the Department of Finance to discuss whether or not we could add more information to this page to further break out the authority budgets. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. That makes me happy to hear. I think that it's important for us to have fulsome conversations about things that are important to us. We talk a lot about addiction. We talk a lot about after-care. We talk a lot about FASD and front-line service providers. A lot of that is found within that budget. I think it would be nice if it was not something we had to switch to go find and that it was all together in the main estimates process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I will take that as a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake. Anything further? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at page 196 at the Centre Square Tower office space. Can the Minister speak to what does that lease cover? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I will ask Ms. Mathison to answer this question, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This lease covers the COVID secretariat space that is being used in the Centre Square Tower on the sixth and seventh floors. We have a lease there in place for this coming fiscal year which expires March 31, 2022. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am curious about this. Why does this lease commitment show up here in Health and Social Services rather than under the COVID secretariat section? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I think it's just because it's an information item.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that. Is the reason, then, that this lease is not being done through Infrastructure as our leases do normally because it would be expiring and is not a long-term lease? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member, Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I will ask Ms. Mathison to answer this question, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is the reason. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I am just getting mixed up from our conversation when we had it the first time around in the briefings. My question is then: if this lease is set to go to March 31, 2022, yet a lot of the COVID secretariat spending we have been told will be wrapping up towards the fall and end of the next calendar year, can the Minister speak to what happens for the additional three months of payments? Are we liable for them? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member, Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I don't have an end date for the COVID secretariat, so I am not sure that it will be wrapped up this fall. In terms of whether this lease has to be paid through until the end of March, I will ask Ms. Mathison to answer that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister, Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't, off the top, have an answer for that. I would have to refer to the lease agreement to see if there is an option, with 30 days' notice, you can opt out. I would think that the staff that are there in the COVID secretariat will need to still be there for some time, even when things get better for COVID, in terms of windup and transition, et cetera. That's as much as I can say right now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know it's not exactly in this area, but what are the terms or the end dates of the positions of the COVID secretariat employees, which would be in part of their contracts? Wouldn't we not, then, have an estimated end date, or do they all go to the end of March, as well? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Just because COVID secretariat was done with a different Minister and it's a different staffing any questions shouldn't be too in-depth into the COVID secretariat, just in regards to the lease information item. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will follow up with the appropriate Minister at the time. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at page 197, and I see that the Territorial Health Investment Fund about the medical travel and oral health and cultural competencies are expiring. My understanding is that this started in 2015 and went to 2018, and then the federal government once again announced, kind of, a new program to bring us to 2021. Are there any discussions or any talk of another Territorial Health Investment Fund, or is this fund simply sunsetted with no plans by the federal government to replace it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member, Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. This is an area of great interest and effort on the part of the department. I will ask the deputy minister to speak to those negotiations that are ongoing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have been working very closely with the other two territories in putting forward the position that the Territorial Health Investment Fund has been adding value and should continue. Our position has been clearly stated, backed up by strong evidence, and fingers crossed. I know the federal government is currently deliberating. We look forward to the outcomes of those discussions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we all look forward to the outcomes of those discussions, so perhaps just a commitment from the Minister that, when we have an answer or a response from the federal government on the Territorial Health Investment Fund going forward, that it will be shared with the appropriate committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I can make that commitment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions on the information items? Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Page 197, the Northern Wellness Agreement, I know that it gave large sums of funding to First Nations groups to deal with their wellness, their healthy child development, mental wellness, and healthy living. Are we going to see any further funding in this area to help the First Nations groups deal with wellness programs? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. We, as a department, fund a lot of different kinds of wellness initiatives like the healthy choices fund, which was just announced today for applications. With respect to this specific federally funded pot of money on wellness, I'll ask the deputy minister if he could provide some more detail. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The agreement that the Member is referring to is a five-year agreement. It started in 2019, it goes to 2024. It's worth a little over \$50 million over five years, and indeed, a good portion of this funding does flow to communities and to different regions, through the community wellness initiatives. There is a cluster of different initiatives that we do under this funding that benefit communities. We have an excellent relationship with the federal government and are always looking for opportunities to find new funds through project funding, as the Minister referred to, that we can flow to communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Regarding that funding, I was provided a table where it showed funding that went to First Nations. Some of them were getting, like, \$190,000 and stuff like that. Is that one-time funding to them to last them five years? Is that the way this is working?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I'd like the director of finance to answer that, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Northern Wellness Agreement, there is a large chunk of that funding, I think around \$6 million, that is distributed to community organizations. Those community organizations develop community wellness plans, which then allows us to fund them for the five-year period for a certain pot of money for each year for them to carry out their community wellness plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: I see they got funding, and I've seen the five-year plan. Then that's it, right? They don't get any more funding whatsoever from this pot of money or any other pots of money, for that matter. Is that a correct assumption? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Having money from the Northern Wellness Fund doesn't preclude organizations and governments from applying for things such as on-the-land healing program, the peer support program we just announced, the suicide prevention program we just announced, and the healthy choices fund that we've talked about. If you get the one pot of money, it

doesn't mean you can't apply for the other pots of money. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Okay. Moving on to another one, it could be similar, but there is the First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program. I'm just wondering if this is where the personal support workers were funded, under this program? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. That's correct. It's under this program.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Is this the personal support workers who are currently working in the health centres and working with the elders in the communities? Is this the same program, the same funding? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. In the case of Fort Providence, this pot of money is providing for an activity aid, a home support worker, a homecare nurse who is an LPN, and a case aid family preservation worker. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: I'm assuming, since there are no line items for these coming up for 2021-2022, this program is defunct or no longer available? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. I know it looks that way, but it's not that way. I'll ask Ms. Mathison to fill in the blanks there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, as of 2019-2020 / 2020-2021, we changed the way we account for these dollars in the budget. We now show that money in the activity of long-term care. When we talked last week about the increases that we saw in the long-term care budget, it was mostly to reflect this funding agreement with the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: I have no further questions, here. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions on the information items? Seeing none, Members, we will now return to the Department summary found on page 169. Health and Social Services, operations expenditure summary, total department, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$596,784,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 81-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 286-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2021-2022 - HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES - DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT
(PAGE 169),
CARRIED

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services at this time. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, operating expenditures, total department is deferred. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Committee, we're going to take a short recess and resume with the next department.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022. Does the Minister of Infrastructure have any opening remarks?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do. I am here to present the 2021-2022 Main Estimates for the Department of Infrastructure. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$7.4 million, or 2.7 percent, over the Main Estimates, 2020-2021. These estimates

support the mandate objectives for the Department of Infrastructure while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- forced growth increases of \$3.1 million, which includes \$1.8 million for increases in electricity rates and \$1.2 million for increased costs to maintain Highway No. 8, the Dempster Highway, and \$83,000 for increased maintenance and utility costs for ferry utilities;
- initiatives funding of \$1.3 million, including \$1.1 million for new lease costs for the Child and Family Services program, as well as \$151,000 for a new occupational health and safety position in Inuvik;
- establishment for utility funding of \$2.8 million related to the Stanton Territorial Hospital;
- a transfer of \$3.6 million and related positions to the Department of Finance for costs associated with procurement shared services; and
- sunsets of \$3.6 million, which consists primarily of time-limited funding including: \$659,000 for Highway No. 8 maintenance and \$390,000 for a permafrost data management and analytical system. Additionally, there was a sunset of \$789,000 to adjust cashflow requirements for the low carbon economy leadership fund as well as an increase of \$469,000 reflecting the sunset of term funding to ECE related to temporary accommodations for families attending Aurora College's Inuvik campus.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly by promoting energy efficiency and sustainability and investing in the infrastructure that connects communities.

To continue working towards our goals outlined in the 2030 Energy Strategy, we will again provide \$2.74 million in core funding to the Arctic Energy Alliance, as well as an additional \$797,000 for community energy grants and \$2.27 million for Northwest Territories-wide energy programs supplemented through the low carbon economy leadership fund.

The department will continue to invest in the Deferred Maintenance Program by upgrading and preserving our assets. When integrated with other GNWT programs, such as the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund, it has allowed the Department of Infrastructure to make efficient use of \$11.8 million dollars of annual funding to significantly improve the overall performance of our assets.

For example, energy conservation and efficiency activities, including biomass boiler installations, LED lighting replacements, and other retrofit activities, have resulted in significant savings that allow additional resources to be redirected to advance other government initiatives.

The Department of Infrastructure also invests \$1.5 million annually to continue to deliver the Community Access Program to improve local transportation infrastructure, including access roads, winter roads, ice roads, marine facilities, and trails. These help to increase food security through locally produced, harvested, and affordable food, and can also help towards economic diversification by supporting growth in non-extractive sectors, such as tourism. That concludes my opening remarks. Quyanainni, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Does the Minister of Infrastructure wish to bring in witnesses?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Thank you. The Minister has requested that we move through the main estimates in such a way that will limit the need for new witnesses to move in and out of the Chamber. The order in which we will consider the department activity has slightly changed, so we will not be going in order as the book. I will call the pages and make sure you guys are clear to the department or the section that we are going through. With that, Minister, will you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me today Deputy Minister Steve Loutitt, as well as assistant deputy minister for regional operations, Gary Brennan.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, and welcome. Thank you. Committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with asset management, starting on page 235, with information items on page 238. Under asset management, are there questions from committee? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I always have questions. The Department of Infrastructure under this section administers the Leasing of Improved Real Property, essentially the

policy that controls how we lease all our property. This policy is from 1998, and I think it's a little outdated in regard to the work we are doing on procurement review. Is there any intention and a timeline to update the Leasing of Improved Real Property Policy? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to turn this over to Deputy Minister Loutitt.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister Loutitt.

MR. LOUTITT: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, we are looking at bringing forward some ideas as far as what we are looking at for amendments to the policy, but at this time, we do not have a time frame. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation previously conducted some analysis of whether it was cheaper to build public housing or to lease it, and they determined, ultimately, in the long run, it was cheaper for them to build and own their infrastructure. I note that our lease policy requires us to undertake a lease-versus-own analysis of all of the GNWT properties to see whether it's cheaper. In general, does the department have a sense of whether it's cheaper for us to own or lease our buildings? I note we built some very large office towers, such as the new government building, before, so was that the determination there, that it was cheaper for us to own it than it was to lease it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. It would depend on what type of asset we are looking at. If we are looking at big asset structures that require, sometimes, a P3, that would depend on the type of building we are looking at. Sometimes, there are opportunities in cost savings to be able to have a look at how we lease out buildings, whether it be more affordable for us to just lease versus purchase. It would all depend on what it is that is slated in our capital assets. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Where I am going with this is that the GNWT is the anchor tenant in most of Northview's building. It's in

downtown Yellowknife. My understanding is that we built a new government building because we understood it was cheaper for us to own our buildings as opposed to leasing them from large southern REITs. My question is specific to class A commercial office spaces. Is it cheaper for us to own it than it is to lease it right now at market rates in Yellowknife? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I am sorry to be just a broken record, but I do want to say that we look at these assets and how we acquire and how we dispose and how we do a lot of things on a case-by-case basis. You look at whether it makes sense for the government to lease versus build or purchase. It would all depend on assets, on the locations, some clients and timelines, on how we determine purchasing or leasing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The current policy allows us to lease buildings off northern-owned landlords if we think we can pay an extra 10 percent on the cost of leasing. I think that is fair, and I don't mind paying a little bit more on leases of northern-owned buildings. I would note that I do not believe that the money we are paying the southern REITs, which is millions and millions of dollars, is actually cheaper than owning the buildings or cheaper than renting off a northern landlord. I question whether we are even in compliance with our leasing of improved real property policy. Can the Minister review our current leases and assess whether they are actually within the 10 percent as required by the policy? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not quite familiar with the number of leases that we have. Perhaps it's quite a bit, given that the Department of Infrastructure is responsible for predominantly a lot of the leases for all the other government departments. I am going to give the assistant deputy minister a few minutes to pull that number, so if I can, to the assistant deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. In terms of Yellowknife, the first comment is that a lot of these leases, a lot of these buildings, were once owned by northern companies that have since sold off to southern REITs. A lot of these times, these

are long-term leases, 20-year leases, so I do not think we have the numbers in front of us to determine what we entered into with the northern vendor versus the southern vendor at the time. I think that we could take a look at how much it is costing us. As you said, we are paying a lot of money in Yellowknife to these northern vendors. Of course, some of the challenges with owning is the up-front cost the government would have to incur to get into the business of owning those buildings, so that is certainly a potential hamper to us moving into ownership, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I will leave this for another time, but it's my view that being the anchor tenant in a bunch of southern REITs' buildings makes absolutely no sense. It does not align with supporting northern businesses, and if we are actually paying above what it would cost for us, we are spending extra money instead of owning the infrastructure. Either we should build it as a government or find actual northern landlords to give that money to, would be my preference. I will leave that as a comment, and I thank the department for their comments on that.

In the area of asset management, my understanding is that the Auditor General is working to create new public accounting standards and that, as part of this work, we will have to carry a liability on our books of what it would cost to essentially not just remediate our assets but to put them in landfills. I believe that work is coming on next year, when the public accounting standards are going to require us to carry a number in our books of what every single building costs to put into a landfill properly, which is a very, very large number, especially the cost in smaller remote communities. I believe we already carry a bit of a liability in regard to asbestos and hazardous materials but not a liability in regard to actually putting those buildings in landfills and the costs. I recognize that policy has not come into place yet, but I am wondering if asset management is involved in that work or if we have in the environment department here any sort of estimate of what that cost is or how they are involved with that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to get ADM Brennan to answer that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. The Member is correct. Effective April 1, 2022,

the Government of the Northwest Territories will have to recognize obligation or liability for all of its assets, not just buildings, but any other asset in case we have a legal requirement to remediate or return it to dump, I think was the terminology that was used. We are working on that right now for all of our buildings. Asset management is involved in coming up with an estimated cost to provide, to remediate all of our buildings to the legislative requirements. That work is ongoing, is being led by the Department of Finance as it applies to all departments and all assets. Of course, the Department of Infrastructure, with the number of assets that it owns, is the largest user of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I will ask a follow-up question to Finance sometime about what that number is actually looking like and how big of a liability it is to be added to our books. Can I just get clarification of whether asset management is where I would find the deferred maintenance budget, and if so, how much deferred maintenance is in the operations budget? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister, do you know?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: What I can say is: when we were doing some of our capital work, we were looking. One of the Members sitting across from me had asked the question on deferred maintenance and what it would cost in terms of getting some of our assets up to a normal standard, and it was to the tune of \$462 million to get some of our deferred assets up to par. If I can ask ADM Brennan if he wants to add anything further to that in terms of what is in the budget right now? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. There are two components for maintenance. Some of the information is in the capital estimates, and there is about \$3 million annually in the operations budget. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member, you ran out of time. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up a little further on what my colleague from Yellowknife North was saying, can you speak to: what does that mean, then, with respect to this new Auditor General liability? It's going to take some time, obviously, for the Northwest Territories to

work on some of that liability. My question is: as regulations increase, they always seem to get stricter with time; what sort of financial impact does that have on us with that liability number we are now going to have to estimate? Do we anticipate it will just continue to increase as regulations get more stringent? Does that then force us to want to remediate some of our sites ahead of time and be more proactive? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will get ADM Brennan to answer that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the simple answer is yes. We would expect that it would increase over time as we add more assets to the system. The exercise we are undertaking right now is to look at our existing assets and looking at our existing regulations and then to try to come up with an engineering estimate to determine how much cost it would take currently to remediate. Given things usually cost more money in the future than they do today, I would expect that it would increase on an annual basis, if we are doing our jobs correctly and coming up with that number. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Then I would anticipate that the Minister will then be directing her department to look and deal with more risk or higher risk-level assets ahead of lower risk ones and that some sort of prioritization like that, like a lens like that, will be put on this analysis? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We currently have what we call a dashboard. It kind of looks at all of our different assets, and we have a red, which basically means that these assets, we need to get them started. Then we have a yellow, and then we have a green. We have different colour coding on our dashboard to be able to look at all of the different assets that are required through the Northwest Territories in terms of our capital assets, so we do have a dashboard to be able to help us to determine what are priority assets and such. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm really glad to hear that. It's going to be quite an undertaking for the department. I'm not sad I'll be missing it. I think the next question I have is around the Preventative Maintenance Program. Given that we have assets that have become worse over time, I'd like to talk about where the money falls within this department or this line item or these line items for the Preventative Maintenance Program so we can keep our assets in better shape. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to hand it to ADM Brennan. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think there are a couple of different places where we have money in our budget currently. Under asset management, as previously mentioned, there is \$3 million for the Deferred Maintenance Program, but also, there is money in regional operations, as well, that each region has to do minor fixes to help upkeep of all the GNWT assets in the system. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like the Minister to maybe speak a bit on optimization of these types of programs. Is the department looking at policy and procedural implementation, such as, for example, drivers' logs, inspection records, safety programs like that that actually have been shown to reduce maintenance costs, et cetera? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have a couple of different programs within the department. I talked a little bit about the Deferred Maintenance Program. That is intended for completing repairs to buildings. I already mentioned that in the Member's first answer. We also do have the different priorities. We have the status of Department of Infrastructure-managed and client-managed capital projects. We have a number of programs here that we look at. As things change and as things evolve and as we start to complete programs and start up new programs and new infrastructure assets, we start to look at what we can do better as a department to ensure that we are following some of the standards and some of the updated licensing. You look within the federal government and all the different policy changes.

Transport Canada just made a new change that really impacts our operations in some of the airports going forward. It's a case-by-case basis, and I think we just need to keep on top of them and just adjust as we need to. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that. I'll continue to follow up with the Minister on that at a future time. I'm just looking at the line item for transportation. Can the Minister speak to the 2019-2020 actual of \$6 million versus the \$3.7 or \$3.8 million that has been the usual forecast? Is that a COVID-related expense? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I ask the Member what page she is referring to?

MS. NOKLEBY: Page 236, the \$6 million in the 2019 actuals, the transportation line.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to get ADM Brennan to find that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. The difference there is about \$2.2 million, and that's basically made up of about \$1.2 million of incremental salaries that we spent on capital projects whereby the spending didn't meet the requirements of a federal funding agreement. We have worked on some bridges historically. Normally, we pay for that out of the capital, but because they never met the capital guidelines, it gets written up into the O and M. Then there was another couple of hundred thousand that was spent related to the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link that we never had in our budget for. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. No. I think I'm good. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions under asset management? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. On page 236, I see a few areas where funding is actually declining: facilities and properties in the program detail, and then contract services and purchase services in the expenditure category. Can someone

explain to me, as we build more and more assets and we just had the largest capital budget ever, how these are declining over time? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the facilities and properties, there was a decrease of just over \$1 million, which meant that there was a transfer of some of the property management budget to the regions where some of the functions were carried out. We also have to consider some amortization costs to some of the buildings, as well. The variance there that we're looking at is for vacant positions for 2019-2020 for facilities and properties of about \$400,000. There is also a surplus in the GNWT building assets being delayed and not really pushed into service until this fiscal year, about \$200,000. Also, the operation and maintenance expenditures for facility risk management, so again, some of the deferred maintenance as well as property management. In terms of the contract services, yes, I see there is a decrease in the budget. Sorry, Madam Chair, that was his second question. There is a decrease in the budget, and part of that is the internal transfer to the budget regional operations activity. That's where the work was performed. There is a decrease, and there is transfer. There is also a sunset of the Northern Transportation Adaptation Initiative. Those were some of the reductions in the costs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Those are pretty good briefing notes, if the Minister ever wants to share them. I think she answered the first two areas. What about purchased services? Is there some reason for the decline there between 2020-2021 and what is forecast for next year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was quickly able to find those numbers right in front of me, but I'm going to get ADM Brennan to answer that one.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. The decrease in purchase services is related to the money that was transferred to the regional operations. About \$1 million or so of money that was held in headquarters was for work being delivered in the region, so we transferred the

money into the regions. About \$150,000 of that was related to purchase services, so there should be a corresponding increase in regional operations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks for that information. How do we pay for maintenance on highways? Is it found here, or is it found in the capital budget? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's in the operations expenditure in the main estimates.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Am I in the right section, then? No? All right. That's all I've got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions under asset management? Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I was looking at your production of granular materials, although I don't quite see a line item for it. I had a question in that area. I'm not sure if that's saying that the GNWT reduces their own stockpile for granular material because I would really hope to stimulate local economies in our communities along the highway systems, whether the department can consider working with local development corporations for the supply of the granular material. It creates much needed employment and ripple effect for the business opportunities to the mechanics and everybody else. It hires local people. Considering that many locals have taken the heavy equipment operator program at the Thebacha campus in Fort Smith, I'm just wondering if the department would consider working with the communities in this regard? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. If and where there is ability to be able to work with some of our community partnership, our Indigenous groups, and having a look at where we can see any improvements in services and if it's a cost saving and if there's opportunity for some training to be able to have some of the community local businesses make use of that program. Madam Chair, this is not something that's new to us. This is something that the GNWT has done in the past in

terms of working. One example is the Tlicho All-Season Road, where there is opportunity to be able to partner and provide training for local residents. That was a nice success story. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: I don't have any further questions, Madam Chair. That's wonderful to hear that, that they would consider that. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under asset management? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 236, Infrastructure, asset management, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$18,138,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now move to corporate management beginning on page 239, with information items on page 241. Corporate management. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone explain to me the increases for department management and finance found on page 240? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to get ADM Brennan to answer this.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. ADM Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. First, for the Department of Management, there was an increase there of about \$200,000, which related to salaries for, I guess it's for an unfunded position, what we'd like to refer as an inaccuracy of amalgamation whereby there wasn't enough funding provided there. On finance, again, it was a funding that was moved in there to cover mostly, I think it was \$600,000 for TSE chargebacks and some salary dollars, as well, for, again, an amalgamation inaccuracy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm trying to understand what an amalgamation inaccuracy is. Can I get an explanation of that? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will get ADM Brennan to answer that again. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. ADM Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I think that, when amalgamation happened, there's been some budgeting issues across the department, and we're trying to clean up some of the internal budgeting that we have. Amalgamation happened fairly quickly, although it's been quite a while since then, but they hadn't been dealt with. We've been, under their new leadership, trying to deal with some of those areas to make sure that we have the funding in the correct locations to deal with the people that we have hired to do those things. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Just to be clear, is it the old transportation and public works amalgamation, Mr. Brennan? Yes?

MR. BRENNAN: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes. Thanks, Madam Chair. I was in the last Assembly, and one of the reasons why they were being amalgamated was basically a cost-cutting, cost-saving exercise. Some people did lose their jobs, and I know there were efforts made to try to retain people through whatever the name of that policy is that GNWT has. There were less people working for Infrastructure than there was for the two separate departments. I'm just trying to square that with adding more money into the budget two or three years later to try to rectify this. It just doesn't seem to make any sense to me. Maybe someone can take another run at it. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. This was amalgamation a number of years ago where public works and department of transportation were put together. I'm not sure the history on that, and I'm just going to look at ADM Brennan to see if he knows some of the history. I'm looking between my deputy minister who might have been there the longest? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Is it going to be ADM Brennan? Okay.

MR. BRENNAN: Sure, yes. Thanks, Madam Chair. When amalgamation happened, and I was around then so I can speak somewhat eloquently to it, I hope, it did happen quickly based on the Cabinet decision to amalgamate the two departments for some reason, which I don't really know myself, but cost-cutting is as good as any other reason, I'm sure. When the budgets were formed, trying to amalgamate two big departments in a hurry, there were definitely some challenges going forward. The department has been looking at some, internally, how do we allocate resources to the people who are there. Yes, there were some positions cut during that time, but the positions that were left over weren't funded properly because errors were made in moving the budgets into the proper location at that time. Those errors have not been corrected until now. We're starting to address some of them in this budget here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. If there's any lessons to be learned from that is: you don't amalgamate departments quickly and think you're going to save a bunch of money. Yes. That's kind of what I was saying in the last Assembly. Okay, been confirmed. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. When we had the Premier in front of us to talk to us about Executive and Indigenous Affairs, I asked where payouts to former deputy ministers would be found, and she mentioned that they would all be found within the individual departments' budgets, so would this be where we would find payouts to deputy ministers or former staff in this area of the budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I will let the Minister answer if that's correct?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We, at least, see \$500,000 change for the last line items in compensation and benefits, and I see about \$1 million in total to these areas. Just more of a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will take that as a comment. Any further questions? Corporate management. Any other questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just a couple of questions. Last year, when we did this exercise, we touched briefly on the topic of tracking carryovers, and I'm wondering: typically, on an annual basis, what percent of Infrastructure's entire budget becomes a carryover to the next year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. That was the question I had about an hour ago in terms of some of our summary costs, and when we get to the front page, we look at -- it's mostly, Madam Chair, because of an accounting structure, and how the Department of Finance allows us to put some of the budgets on our estimates. I am going to ask ADM Brennan to be able to summarize that. It's kind of hard to explain how the budget is comprised. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Carryovers are essentially a capital item on capital projects, when we don't spend money, but you request a carryover. On the main estimates, there are no carryovers, except there were provisions to come for supplementary funding if you have a federal agreement where you can carry money over. Generally speaking, there are no carryovers in this budget except as it ties to federal O and M funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Sorry, I am breaking up my questions more today because I got some flak for that last time. There was discussion last year about a project tracking system in order to be able to track the carryovers that are happening. My assumption would be that this would come out of the O and M budget through department management, and I am wondering if that is budgeted for within this year's O and M through department management. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Any further questions?

MS. CLEVELAND: No, I'm happy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions under Infrastructure, corporate management? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 240. Infrastructure, corporate management, operations expenditures, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$7,898,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now move on to regional operations. This is one where we are going to jump ahead a little bit. All right, committee. This is regional operations, beginning on page 250 to 253, but there are a whole bunch of informational items. If they pertain to this department, you can ask them on those for now. Do I have questions on regional operations? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at page 251, and we spend \$32 million a year on leases. If I go to the information item on 263, lease commitments, it's \$12,124,000. Can I just get clarification of the difference between those numbers? I want to understand: how much a year are we spending on leases? Is it \$32 million a year or \$12 million? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are looking at the proposed budget, so we are asking an increase of \$1.5 million, which brings us up to \$32,601,000, and these are costs associated with Child and Family Services. It also includes some of the leasing funds for Education, Culture and Employment, some of the temporary student housing that has ended.

To answer the Member's question, it is an increase of \$3.4 million in terms of that. There are a number of things involved, some of the Stanton legacy, the long-term care facility, the lease cost associated with Child and Family Services, Education, Culture and Employment, some of the temporary housing. There are a number of variances in the budget in terms of how we justify the increases. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just waiting for my light to turn on there. I guess the question I am asking is... [Microphone turned off]

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Member for Yellowknife North. Sorry. Just wait. How's this? Go ahead, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand we have added the ECE and Child and Family Services leasing. I am not opposed to adding. When we need space, we need it. What I am trying to understand is: on page 251, we spend \$32 million on leases, but on 263, we spend \$12 million on leases. I just would like to understand the difference between those two numbers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thought I was clear in explaining how much we did spend, but obviously not. I will get ADM Brennan to speak to the other page that we are referring to. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. ADM Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The question the Member is asking, I think, is the \$12 million commitment on the leases page. That is our actual base rent that we pay on our annual leases. The additional money, which gets us to \$32 million, so another \$20 million or so, is actually the O and M cost, with the utilities and maintenance and other types of activities that we have to pay as part of all of those leases to get to the \$32 million that you saw on page 251. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a lot of money being spent here. I'm trying to understand it. The \$35 million in utilities on page 251, that would be, essentially, the O and M for the buildings that we own, not the leases? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just reiterate my previous comment. I think that there is \$32 million being spent here, and a hard look needs to be taken at it and then updating that policy. Can I get an explanation for the \$5 million increase to highway operations, what that is going to accomplish? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Yes, Madam Chair. The highway operations increase of \$4.6 million includes the \$400,000 for the internal reallocation for the maintenance on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway from winter roads as the budget is no longer needed, that's significantly changed; the \$536,000 incremental increase for Highway No. 8 maintenance; and the amortization adjustment for the highway asset. I'm just going to double check the number here for highway maintenance. The variance is a surplus due to the amortization expense. It was lower than expected in a previous year because of delay in capital assets and also being pushed into service by about \$4.4 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was hoping the Minister would help me understand what the threshold -- in our capital budget, there are a number of highways things. Sometimes, there is chipsealing; sometimes, there is completely rebuilding a highway, a bridge -- just kind of understanding the threshold of what this \$85 million of highway operations is spent versus when it all of a sudden gets kicked into becoming a capital expense, what that threshold is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to ask ADM Brennan to answer that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, ADM Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. This \$85 million here, first of all, \$55 million of this is amortization, so now we are down to \$30 million. Basically, what that does is keeping our highways safe: snowplowing, minor surface repairs, blading on the non-chipsealed highways, and some minor repairs like that there. When we get into capital, it's more of the major items. When we start digging up a highway, replacing a culvert, doing extended length of chipseal, that is kind of what that covers there. The O and M budget is meant to keep the highway safe on the everyday; the capital budget is meant to improve it for a longer term. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. That makes sense. I always forget amortization is found in the O and M budget, so that is where that \$55 million came from. Do we have an estimate of what it costs us to maintain a highway per kilometre? I

recognize that is not an easy figure and that it varies depending on the highway and it varies depending on whether it's an ice road, but I am wondering if we, in some of our highways reporting, have a rough estimate of what we spend per year to maintain our highways based on kilometres or some sort of distance metric. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have seen the numbers by highway. We had it broken down. I want to say it's a case-by-case basis. Every highway in the Northwest Territories, all 10 of them, have different costs associated with them and some based on some of these different gradings on the road. Some are lucky enough to have concrete; some of us are stuck with gravel, but they all cost different. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I am going to switch a bit. I have seen different numbers at different times of what the cost per kilometre is. Is there a cost built into replacement, as well? My understanding of the way roads work is that every 30 or 50 years they have to be replaced, and that is built into the amortization in a sense. We amortize the asset over a fixed number of years, but then we also have to replace it again. Is there anywhere in the budget where we are actually reflecting what it costs to replace a highway, beyond just the O and M? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I remember now why I had seen that number recently. It was because it was sent to committee yesterday, so I am sure the Member has received that yesterday. Perhaps he didn't. I don't know. I am not going to speak for that, but the numbers are in there. We can send them again if Members need to re-see that. In terms of some of the costs for rebuilding, it would vary. I will ask ADM Brennan to see if he has got any of the costs associated with building new highways. Because the Northwest Territories is so vast and we are different geographically, we are different that way, so I will get the ADM. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. ADM Brennan.

MR. BRENNAN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of replacing of the highways, we are under a constant reconstruction of our highway system, so

that is one of the things that the department has always asked federal funding for, was to continue to reconstruct or maybe maintain the highway system. Currently, we spend about \$38 million a year, \$22 million federal, \$16 million of money under our chipseal bridges and culverts budget, in what we consider to be rebuilding our highways, and that, that money, tends to roll year over year. We try to have long-term agreements with Canada. Right now, we are using our building Canada plan funding, which expires in 2023-2024, at \$22.5 million per year plus our \$16 million per year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Mr. Norm.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Noting the time, I ask that you rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act; Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2), Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020; Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election; Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund; Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022 and would like to report

progress, with one motion carried, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Secunder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act
 - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Act

- Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act

- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Securities Act

- Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020

- Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election

- Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund

- Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT

- Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT

- Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT

- Tabled Document 286-19(20), Main Estimates 2021-2022

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.